

**THE
RADIO
ONE**

Story of Pop

THE FIRST
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS

PETE TOWNSHEND: From Singles to Symphonies

LED ZEPPELIN: Masters of Heavy Rock

ROCK MOVIES: Festivals take to film

PLUS: Lou Reed, Psychedelic Soul, Clever Rock & more

PART 21

25p

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The music was undergoing a profound change. The Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper' may have been the recognisable turning point but in effect it only highlighted an unspoken trend. The lines were firmly drawn between 'rock' and 'pop'. Rock was somehow more serious than pop; less manifestly commercial. Suddenly, the music became intellectual, largely because outsiders (particularly critics in journals that hitherto had sneered at teenage music, found enough in it to fuel their pens and attract their attentions). The music became an art form.

The transformation was important because it created a class structure. There was a certain arrogance about 'serious' rock that condemned pop as trivial. It also, perhaps dangerously, started to affect the audiences who elevated their rock heroes to the stature of saints or supermen. At the very least it helped make supergroups. Such is the major theme of the issue. The formation of supergroups is discussed; the questions are posed. Why should a band of good musicians suddenly be placed on a pedestal so large that it can only tumble into disappointment? Why did some last a reasonable course while others disappeared like a bubble? Among the more enduring was Led Zeppelin who managed somehow to live through the hype and emerge in the face of honest criticism as a good, perhaps great, but certainly not near-Godlike group. This band is analysed, as is the trend towards 'clever' rock, another facet of the intellectualisation of a popular entertainment medium. The hey-day of such pretensions was short but the effects linger in a more serious but less over-acclaimed attitude to music.

In addition, the superior songwriting talents of Pete Townshend are discussed and show that his intelligence, while obvious, has never allowed itself to be over-puffed by extravagant praise. We also look at another 'serious' trend, that of black music to a wider consciousness and social awareness.

Correction: The article on Otis Redding in Issue 14 was written by Neil Spencer, not Roger St. Pierre as printed.

Although the radio programme and this publication have been linked for readers in the UK, we have taken care to ensure that readers abroad will find this publication complete in itself.

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IN THIS ISSUE

PETE TOWNSHEND by Mitch Howard: The songwriting genius behind the Who. For 10 years he has written about ordinary situations in a special way – and it still works 561

ROCK MOVIES by Mick Gold: They're successful when they show what's new in the music and culture 564

TALKING 'BOUT MY GENERATION: Lyrics of 'Get It On' and 'Space Oddity' in full plus analysis 568

PSYCHEDELIC SOUL by Neil Spencer: Sly & the Family Stone brought a subtle change to the straightforward soul we had known 569

LED ZEPPELIN by Steve Jukes: Their musical expertise has made them one of the greatest rock bands of all time 573

SUPERGROUPS by Charles Shaar Murray: The pedigreed musicians who played musical chairs as they formed their different supergroups 576

LOU REED by Roger Greenaway: His life-style and music brought a new perspective to the '70s – one of bold gay campery 579

NASHVILLE by Peter Jenkins: 'Music City USA' where the unknowns rub shoulders with the million dollar stars 582

CLEVER ROCK by Steve Jukes: Musicians who are concerned with experimentation and the development of rock music 584

POP FILE by Mitch Howard: Pop from A-Z 587

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THE MUSIC: '60s-'70s.

Pete Townshend: The 70's Mod

Back in 1964, a West London group called the High Numbers changed their name to the Who and came on as a bunch of Shepherd's Bush yobs singing Tamla Motown and soul songs. Then their guitarist started writing songs *about* Mods *for* Mods, and the group got very big very quickly.

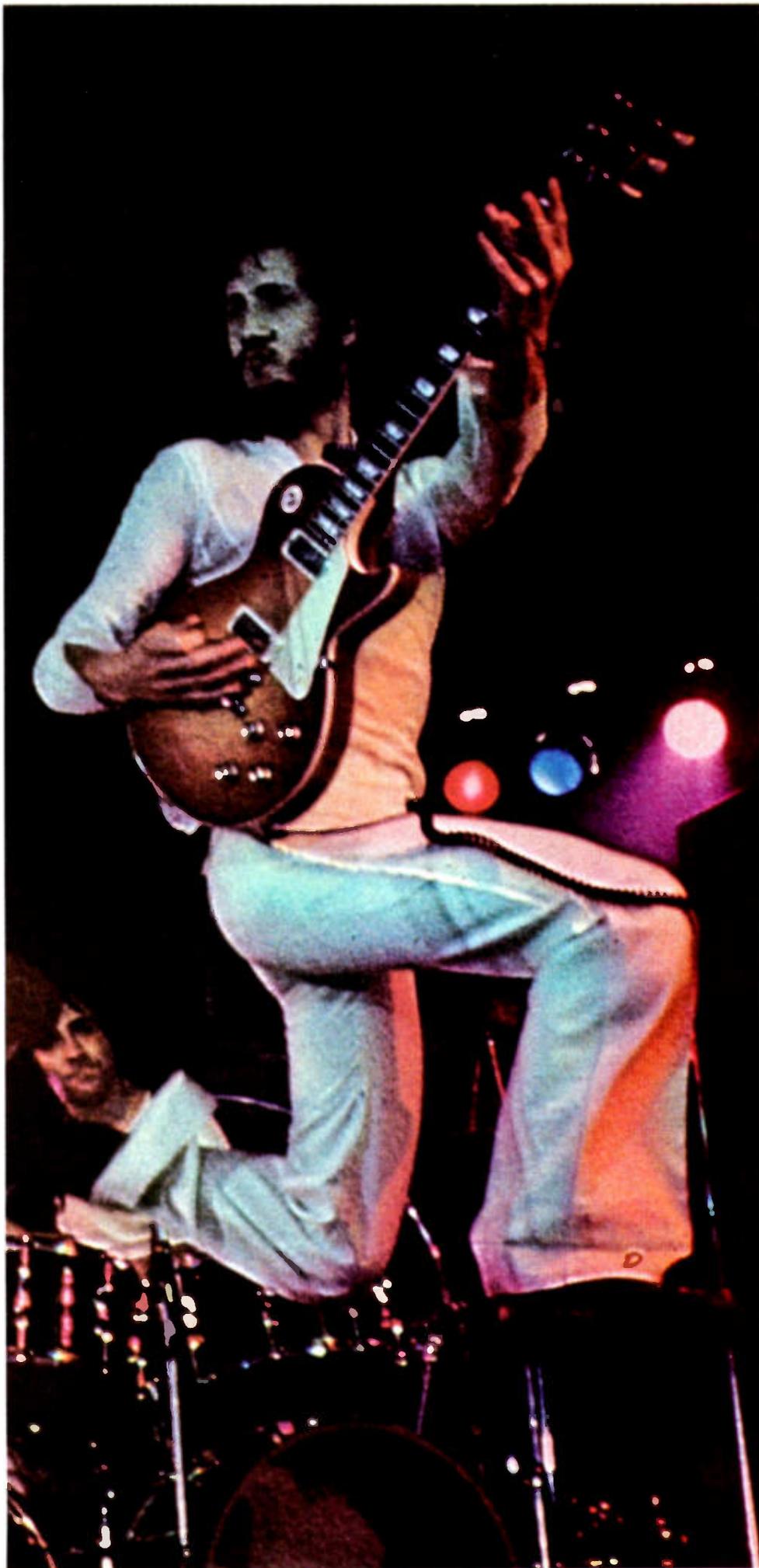
'I Can't Explain', 'Anyway Anyhow Anywhere', 'The Kids Are Alright' and 'My Generation' . . . the songs came roaring out and they were only the first of many memorable Pete Townshend songs since, that put him alongside Ray Davies, Lennon and McCartney and Jagger and Richard as one of *the* great British rock writers.

The strength of Townshend's best songs lies in his direct and out-front approach to the subjects he writes about, and it's to his credit that despite coming out of acid and getting firmly into Meher Baba, and despite all the superstar treatment the Who have received, Pete has avoided the trap of projecting a super-hip image of himself to the world. He's always attempted to put over what he sees and feels, and if sometimes it's a bit weird, obscure or trite, that's OK, he's still gone and said it.

Pete Townshend may live intently in the world of his imagination, but he's kept his feet firmly on the ground – to the point of bringing his songwriting round full circle with his 1973 work, 'Quadrophenia', in which he tells the story of one of those Mods the Who were playing for back in 1964 – only this time with more insight into the situation than in his early songs. Can you imagine Mick Jagger writing a rock opera about the kids who used to see the Stones, or John Lennon writing one about kids in the Liverpool streets? No more than you can imagine Pete Townshend living it up with the Cannes jet-set, or hob-nobbing it with the New York avant-garde art crowd.

Pete Townshend's first songs were

L. Van Houten.



songs for Mods from pop to pep pills helping his audience make it through a short, hard weekend. He wrote about ordinary situations that the kids found themselves in. 'I Can't Explain' capsulates the Mod's feeling of teenage confusion:

*'Dizzy in the head and I'm feelin' bad
Things you say have got me real mad
I'm getting funny dreams again and again
I know what they mean but I can't
explain'*

'A Legal Matter' told the story of a kid escaping from imminent suburban marriage horror, looking through catalogues of houses and babies' blouses, and other songs echoed similar teenage themes. 'Anyway Anyhow Anywhere' was an unstoppable assault of pilled-up energy, a type of song not heard before. It was a different world again from the Beatles' conventional romances or the Stones' more sophisticated blues imitations. Not even locked doors would stop the guy in the song doing what he wanted to do. It was hard, aggressive stuff to get smashed to and to smash things to. 'The Kids Are Alright' was about a guy who sensed he was moving away from his girlfriend. He hears wedding chimes, goes out of his mind, and leaves her dancing with the kids in the club.

Generation Anthem

All these elements were brought together in 'My Generation', which became an anthem not just for Mods but for just what the song says – a generation:

*'People try to put us down
Just because we get around
Things they do look awful cold
Hope I die before I get old
Talkin 'bout my generation'*

The song featured Roger Daltrey singing with a beautiful, blocked, ambiguous stutter: 'Why don't you all f-f-f-fade away'. After telling the older generation where to go, and to stop being patronising towards their offsprings' attempts to find themselves, Pete set off to find himself and left this kind of straightforward electric street-ditty song behind. 'Hope I die before I get old' was exactly the same message that had inspired the first self-conscious teenage generation in the '50s – when the idol was James Dean, and the thing was to live fast, die young, and have a good-looking corpse. But the Who were no longer your average kids in the street, they were now moving in a world of hectic touring, big promotions, endless publicity, flights to America and so forth. And Pete's songs began to change.

By 1966 they were getting more subtle, as in 'Substitute', a song buzzing with suggestions and associations about deceit, false images, sublimation, and the 'plastic values' of the world: 'I was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth . . . look pretty tall but my heels are high . . . look all white but my dad was black, and can see right

through your plastic mac.'

While the very first Townshend songs were musically derivative of early Kinks material like 'All Day And All Of The Night', 'Substitute' leaned heavily on Eddie Cochran for its simple chord sequence. Later the Who were to record 'Summertime Blues' and acknowledge what they owed to Cochran, which was more than just the 'Substitute' riff, for Pete's early songs are much in the tradition of Eddie Cochran's songs like 'C'Mon Everybody', 'Somethin' Else', 'Summertime Blues' and 'Teenage Heaven'.

By 'Substitute', the Who's musical style was set, and the influences in Townshend's songs were just influences rather than signs of what he was imitating. He had started to develop more of his own themes, as in 'I'm A Boy' (transexual confusion) and 'Pictures Of Lily' (sexual fantasy). But it wasn't all smooth going. 1966 saw the release of the second Who album, 'A Quick One While He's Away', and the best songs on it – 'Whisky Man' and 'Boris The Spider' – were both written by John Entwistle. Pete Townshend's contribution was the title track, a song that lasted half the second side and told the story of a girl who sits in Ivor The Engine Driver's lap and later goes home with him for a nap while her boyfriend is away. The boyfriend returns, she confesses and is forgiven. The story is a little drawn out but it is notable as an early attempt to move out of the confines of the Top 10 oriented song to tell a story.

After this first 'mini-opera', Townshend included another one on the band's 1967 album, 'The Who Sell Out'. 'Rael' is not one of his best efforts, and appears to be an attempt at a song of some spiritual significance, though it's difficult to imagine what, because the words are almost impossible to decipher.

This period was an uneven one for the Who, and one when Pete provided them with a number of songs on all sorts of themes. On 'The Who Sell Out' there was 'Mary Ann With The Shaky Hand', 'Tattoo', and the un-Who-like soft song 'Sunrise'. In 1966 there had been the whimsical 'Happy Jack'; and then, in 1968, came a lightly funny song about greyhounds, 'Dogs', a run-of-the-mill rocker 'Call Me Lightning', and the Bo Diddley-inspired 'Magic Bus'. The best song from this period was 'I Can See For Miles', in which the Who began to move away from their rough, attacking, early sound into an equally attacking spacey sound. With magic in his eyes, he could see through deceit as far as the Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal. The acid implications were obvious.

In 1968, the Who released their double-album 'Tommy', which may not have been the first rock opera (the Pretty Things' 'S.F. Sorrow' claims that honour), but it was certainly the first to gain wide appreciation. It also established the Who in America, and gave their British fans a new injection of energy. Pete had emerged from his dabbling in this and that and appeared to be on the road to somewhere



Redferns

again. Whether it was Meher Baba's retreat, or the pinball machines on Brighton pier wasn't quite clear. The pros and cons of 'Tommy' have been argued sufficiently



Pete Townshend and John Entwistle.

before to be avoided here, but whether 'Tommy' was a good story or not, and whether the songs were that good or not, it certainly paved the way for subsequent

big-scale rock productions like *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and gave a boost for rock's claim to be taken seriously as something capable of producing more than forgettable Hit Parade nonsense.

The Who played 'Tommy' time and time again the world over, and everyone began to wonder if they'd ever play anything else, but Pete Townshend, who by now was turning away from the influence of acid to that of the spiritual teacher Meher Baba, was moving on again. He set down his reflections in a series of singles that began with 'The Seeker', a key song that reveals where he was at this time and his general approach to his work:

*'I've looked under chairs
I've looked under tables
I've tried to find the key to 50 million
fables
They call me the seeker*

He appeared again as a seeker of truth with 'Won't Get Fooled Again', and 'Let's See Action', which also appeared on Pete's solo album of songs dedicated to Meher Baba, 'Who Came First' (1971). Pete became a firm devotee of Baba and, as it appears, believes that Baba was one of a number of *avatars* or spiritual leaders who were manifestations of total goodness and came to show the world the way by their example. In the end everything and everyone is striving for union (oneness) which is the essential nature of the universe, as in the example of all colours of the rainbow making white light, or all notes making up one note (as in Pete's song 'Pure And Easy' on the Baba album). Whether you share his view or not, there's no doubt about his sincerity, or about the fact that he's never used his influence and position to preach Baba to his public. Even the Baba album consists mainly of simple, fresh songs like 'Sheraton Gibson', 'Time Is Passing', or typical Townshend cosmic statements that don't relate to Baba specifically, such as 'Pure And Easy', or 'Forever's No Time At All':

*'I sing my song to the wide open spaces
I sing my heart out to the infinite sea
I sing my song to the free'*

Pete Townshend seems inclined to take to these metaphysical flights of fancy. Sometimes, as in 'The Seeker', they lead somewhere – sometimes they get nowhere at all. He seems to get carried away on some weird idea that takes him over so far that he doesn't know where to call a halt. Hence the weaknesses in the plot of 'Tommy', and the lack of biting songs on 'Who's Next'. Although this album contained some of the Who's best music pre-Quadrophenia, it was generally confused and apparently not about anything at all. Pete says it himself on 'Getting In Tune':

*'I'm singing this note 'cause it fits in well
with the chords I'm playing,
I can't pretend there's any meaning in
the things I'm saying
But I'm in tune, right in tune,*

And I'm gonna tune right in on you.'

He has said that he was into some weird things at the time, and that the whole album doesn't make much sense without the film that was supposed to accompany it but never materialised. This was going to be a grand-scale presentation set in the future in a polluted world (naturally), where everyone is fed their experiences down tubes, so eventually only a core of actors are left to play out everyone's lives for them. Someone finds an old pile of rock records and decides to build a new religion around rock & roll, and the film was to end with a six-week rock & roll festival that Pete actually wanted to happen, complete with the Who playing for six weeks! The production was to end with the band going up in a puff of smoke. It was an idea that didn't come off.

But, having gone right to the outer limits of sanity and a free-ranging imagination, Pete began to bring it all back home again. There was 'Join Together', a straightforward call to join together with the band, quite different from the philosophical reflections of previous singles; and most important of all the arrival in 1973 of 'Quadrophenia', which marks a full circle in Pete Townshend's songwriting, where he re-examined what he was writing about in the Who's Mod days.

Musically and lyrically it's his greatest achievement yet, and it's notable in lacking the faults of loose structure and a story that doesn't quite make sense that spoils 'Tommy'. It's a tight story of a mid-'60s Mod getting into all the Mod trips, getting pushed around in the world, taking it out in fights, pills, music and adventures, and still wondering who or what the hell he is.

Despite getting into the Mod fashions and crazes, and for a while finding both some kind of identity and anonymity among the crowd, the tone of this massive work still carries echoes of 'I Can't Explain', and of 'My Generation' in songs like 'Sea And Sand'.

*'Come sleep on the beach
Keep within my reach
I'm feeling high with you here
I just want to die with you near
I'm wet and I'm cold
But thank God I ain't old.'*

Only this time Townshend doesn't spell it all out. He's attempted and succeeded in portraying the state of mind of the Mod boy, and he sustains the ideas right through four sides of the album.

The whole work succeeds because Pete Townshend has succeeded at last in throwing up a big-scale idea and then keeping it under control. Every song he has written and every phase he has been through has contributed to 'Quadrophenia', which is a tribute to Pete's seemingly inexhaustible energy and unstoppable imagination. But, underpinning it all, is the guy of 'Anyway Anyhow Anywhere' – who was going where he wanted, never mind what anyone else wanted.

(All lyrics © Fabulous Music)

Rock Movies

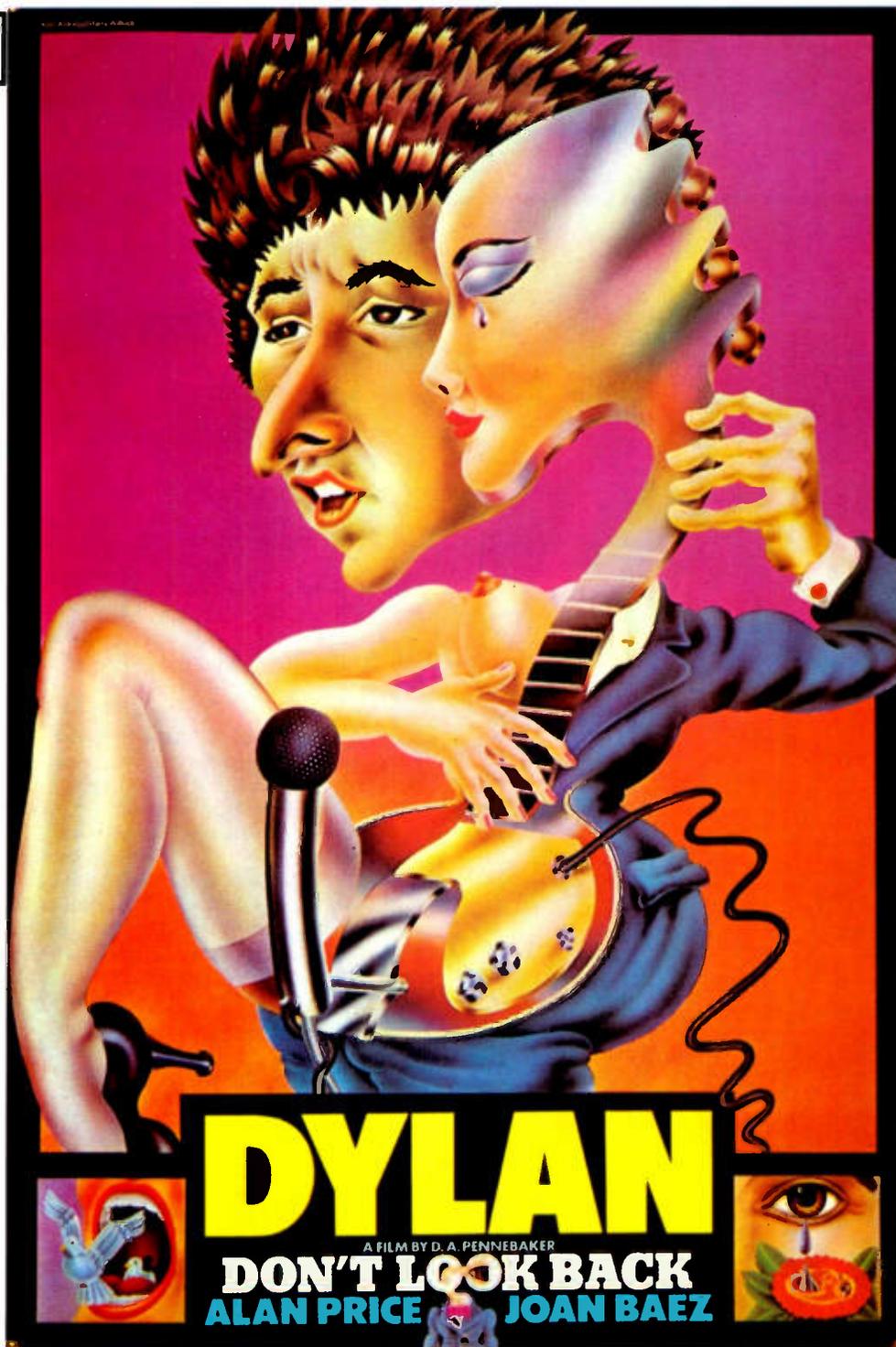
In the mid-'60s rock was born out of pop. A music that had been basically a form of entertainment, a safety valve for youth bored by school or trapped in frustrating jobs, became a self-conscious code for transmitting ideas about dress, speech, relationships, values . . . about little less than how to live.

The subversive element that had been implicit in Elvis' pelvis and Chuck Berry's allegories of teenage life, became an explicit recipe created from ingredients such as Bob Dylan's poetry, the sense of ongoing experimentation that the Beatles came to represent, the fall-out of political ideas from the American Civil Rights movement, and the ferment of life-styles in communes from the North of Scotland to Haight-Ashbury.

The appearance of extended rock works such as 'Sgt. Pepper' (1967) and 'Tommy' (1968) suggested complex scenarios for individual development, or different ways of seeing society through rock music. But LPs can only be listened to, not lived in. So, in a way, the increased scope of the music led to the increasing importance of movies, either as fiction vehicles for fantasy characters whose identity was partly defined by the script and partly defined by the music on the soundtrack (*Easy Rider* and *Performance*), or as documentaries that related the music to the personalities in the film (*Don't Look Back*), and to the audiences that went along to watch (*Woodstock*).

Viewed in the light of *Woodstock's* unpaid cast of half a million, *Monterey Pop* had a small-time, civilised atmosphere. Lou Adler and John Phillips were seen managing the affair with hip military precision – traditional Hollywood hustlers in hippie clothing – a world away from the beatific smile on Mike Lang's face as he admits (on film) that the Woodstock Festival has been a financial disaster.

Monterey Pop was most impressive in the way it celebrated music as a physical force. Generally speaking, the best of rock re-connects us to our bodies, and Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Otis Redding did just that in the film: Redding bobbing and



weaving in the spotlight, Joplin dragging her way through a blues, and Hendrix cremating his guitar at the end of his set. The ecstatic explosion at the end of the film was reserved for Ravi Shankar's performance, which both successfully conveyed the growing fascination with Indian forms and showed one of India's greatest artists at the height of his powers.

The Woodstock Festival happened in August, 1969, just two years after Monterey, but as an event and in the complexity of the resulting movie it was a whole different ballgame. The crowd had escalated to a sprawling, spontaneous city of half a million, and in place of Pennebaker's relatively straightforward record of Monterey's musical performances, Mike

Wadleigh's *Woodstock* film amounted to a grand vision of the rise and fall of rock culture. The opening shots of tractors rolling through the meadows, the first of the crowd arriving on horseback, and the construction of the stage – all to the tune of Crosby, Stills and Nash's 'Long Time Coming' – suggested a gathering of the tribes, and the building of a city of music in upstate New York.

Because the vision of a rock Utopia that *Woodstock* offered was so inviting at the time, it's easy to be cynical today about the limited nature of that liberation: nude bathing, open dope smoking and a feeling of togetherness for suburban white youth. Although the movie was tinged with the 'ain't-we-beautiful' type of self-righteous-

ness that haunted flower power during its brief life, it did also give a convincing account of how important rock had become as a language for saying things about personal freedom, society, and how much of the 'good life' the music could contain.

It's hard to forget such sequences as the electric energy of Sly Stone swooping across the stage in slow-motion, wailing 'I want to take you higher' like a black angel; Sha Na Na's combination of punk hairstyles, ludicrous choreography and neat harmonising on 'At The Hop'; and Country Joe attempting to lead the masses in the singing of his Vietnam rag: 'Listen, people, I don't know how you can expect to stop the war if you can't sing any better than that! . . . while a bouncing ball spelt out the words for the movie audience. The movie's ending was the most memorable image of the contradictions of rock culture that a film has yet achieved: Jimi Hendrix's deranged version of 'The Star Spangled Banner' was played over shots of the departing crowd squelching their way through a sea of mud, with stragglers scavenging for clothes amidst the garbage.

A mere four months after *Woodstock's* 'little bit of heaven', *Gimme Shelter* captured Altamont's version of hell. The movie itself probably isn't as good as *Woodstock*, but as the whole meaning of the Stones' 1969 American tour was changed by the Altamont concert, the movie would have had to have been pretty flexible to adapt to *that* change. The film didn't illuminate the Stones' way of making music too much: the group is seen entering Muscle Shoals studio but nothing is revealed about their recordings – much better to see Jean-Luc Godard's *One Plus One* for a deadpan account of how 'Sympathy For The Devil' was recorded – nor did the film explain why Altamont turned out so badly. Was the aggro caused by the low stage? Bad acid? Or were the Angels simply as psychopathic as the media had always painted them? Although *Gimme Shelter* doesn't answer these questions, it remains an important document simply because the Stones are probably the most important single band in rock music.

Many of the Stones' songs have celebrated callousness in personal relationships ('Under My Thumb'), and at times the mood even approaches a Dionysiac celebration of unfettered sexuality and violence ('Midnight Rambler'), and so the questions raised by their use of the Hell's Angels as a security force at Altamont, and the murder of a man within a few feet of the stage, represent a head-on collision between the Stones' public and private selves. Since the identification between the values of the music and the performers as human beings is stronger in rock than in any other art form, it becomes impossible for Jagger to denounce the Angels as unpleasant and anti-social without blowing his own credibility as the arch-stylist of revolt.

But aside from such moral dilemmas, no film of the Stones in action could possibly be dull. The sequence showing

their Madison Square Garden concert, fully captures the energy and mastery of their music, and the shots of the Angels' faces as they watch Jagger in action at Altamont say as much about the interaction between rock music and its audience as any film.

Don't Look Back is a more successful documentary of the way in which a performer's personality provides the raw fuel for his art, as it follows Bob Dylan on his British tour of 1965. Dylan wasn't afraid of appearing aggressive on camera, but his targets were more intellectual: the science student in argument with Dylan about the value of friends, and the *Time* magazine reporter who tries to tell Dylan he can't sing as well as Caruso!! The film let Dylan's songs speak for themselves, recorded his hostility at other people's need to interpret him, and brought out the contrast between the isolation of the performer on stage and the manic world of the rock & roll poet on tour, ranging from the camaraderie with other musicians such as Alan Price and Donovan, to the phone juggling of Albert Grossman and Tito Burns working to get every last penny out of the BBC.

Pure Fiction

Performance and *Easy Rider* are the two major fiction films to incorporate the life-style of rock music, and surprisingly they arrived at similar conclusions ('freedom is in your head') by totally different paths. *Easy Rider* revolved around two bikers who had made a highly profitable drug-smuggling trip up from Mexico, and then decided to celebrate by riding down to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras. The journey becomes an exploration of American society, and the response that their romantic presence arouses. Peter Fonda, at his Christ-like dreamiest, and Dennis Hopper as his stoned, excitable companion made a great pair, but the whole thing would quickly have become tedious but for the inspired cameo role of a small-town alcoholic lawyer (Jack Nicholson) who grasps at the image of freedom that the two men represent and rides off with them.

The simplicity of the storyline, Laszlo Kovac's photography, and a well varied rock score, added up to an account of the hippie dream of freedom which was rooted in a stream of American culture that viewed travelling as a form of transcendence (such as Kerouac's *On The Road*). All three men were finally murdered by the forces of redneck wrath, and Jim McGuinn sang 'The Ballad Of Easy Rider' (written by Dylan) over shots of the burning bodies:

*'All they wanted was to be free
And that's the way it turned out to be
Flow river flow'*

Easy Rider was the most financially successful attempt to cash in on the youth market, but it worked because it balanced the dream of freedom against a bitter view of American realities: southern hostility, the pathetic hopes of the kids planting

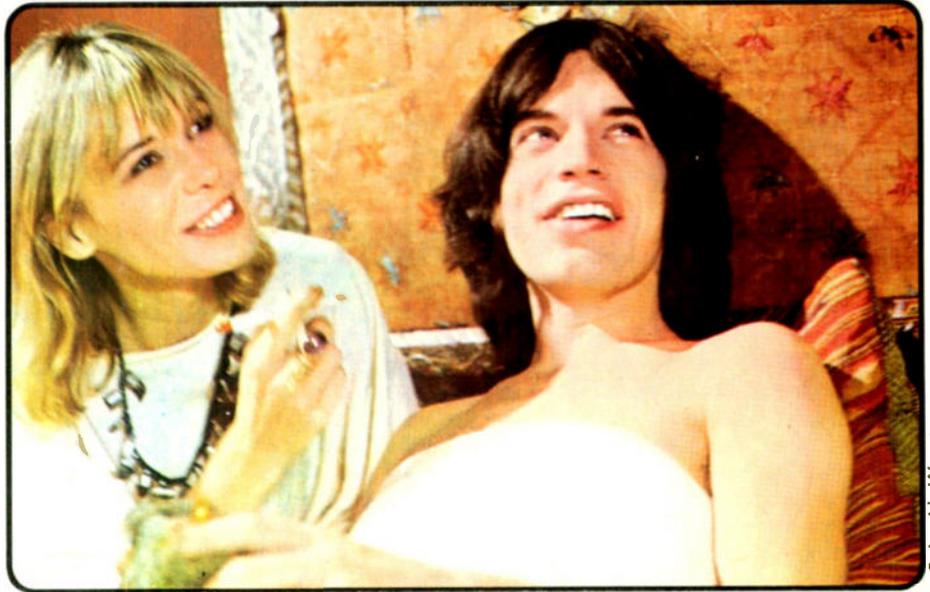
seeds in the dust on a commune, and the whole compromised nature of a dope dealer's search for liberation. Not surprisingly, the film had something of the moral structure and empathy with nature of a good Western.

Performance was a far more decadent affair, emphatically rooted in the sweet stench of decay, invoking the spirit of Baudelaire, the hermetically sealed paradoxes of Borges, and Bosch's textures of flesh and luxury. The film revolved around a fleeing gangster (James Fox) who takes refuge in the house of a has-been pop idol (Mick Jagger); gradually the gangster's identity is subverted by Jagger's amoral world of sensory impressions and bisexuality, while Jagger perceives in the gangster a way of regaining his lost power. When the gang come round to claim their errant member for a 'one-way ride', it's impossible to be certain who they're taking away. Moreover, the film's opening sequence intercuts a Rolls Royce journey, unidentified bodies being carressed or violated, and a trial at which a barrister is arguing that his clients are not a gang of hoodlums but part of a respectable business concern. The gang's world of violence and takeover was viewed as a branch of socially approved commercial enterprise, at odds with the artist's drive towards introspection and sensual experimentation. "Nothing is true – everything is permitted," was Jagger's key line.

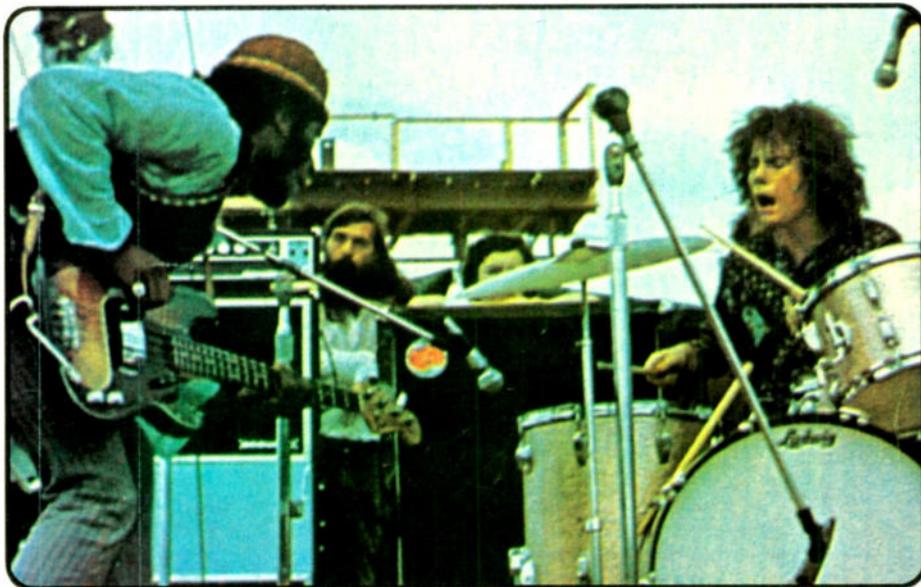
Performance is a film about identity and the moral systems of self-contained worlds rather than a rock film, but Jagger's understated performance and a complex soundtrack (with contributions from Jack Nietzsche, Randy Newman, Ry Cooder, the Last Poets and the Stones) made the movie's mood inseparable from the dank underworld of urban flower power. Donald Cammell's script and Nicolas Roeg's photography combined to produce one of the most audacious British films in terms of visual style and intellectual self-confidence. "The only performance that really makes it – really makes it all the way – is the one that achieves madness, right?" . . . muttered Jagger matter-of-factly. The distributors didn't agree; they were so horrified by what they had produced that they shelved the film for a year, eventually re-cut it, and almost succeeded in burying it completely.

The most powerful moments in rock movies occurred when the films actually interlocked with what was new and exciting in the music and culture. *Woodstock* captured the paradoxical quality of gigantic festivals: partially a dream of liberation, and partially a hysterical scene of mass conformity. *Performance* got very close to the self-destructive fantasy elements in the life-style of the hippie ghettos. And *Easy Rider* conveyed the excitement of drugged-up young people leaving the city, and trying to act like pioneers in a crowded country.

Since these films were made, there have been numerous imitations and spin-offs from them. A succession of unimaginative records were made of concerts and



Jimi Hendrix climaxing his act by burning his guitar in *Montreux Pop*. Anita Pallenberg and Mick Jagger in *Performance*.



Two contrasting scenes from *Woodstock* – beating out the music on stage and resting in the sunshine, among the mattresses of hay.

festivals, trying to re-capture the idealism and complexity of *Woodstock*. George Harrison's *Concert for Bangla Desh* was filmed with an amazing lack of originality; and *Glastonbury Fayre* offered more shots of half-naked girls, stoned groups, and general silliness. There have also been a stream of films that mixed up motorbikes, revolution, drugs, death, and rock music in varying proportions, and with varying degrees of boredom. But there have also been three films in the '70s that have successfully explored new areas of rock music and its associated culture.

The Harder They Come, directed by Perry Henzell, starred reggae singer Jimmy Cliff in a role very close to his own background – as a poor boy struggling to become a reggae star in the shanty towns of East Kingston, Jamaica. The film was made completely on location, and the speech patterns and settings seemed totally authentic. The significance of marijuana, the Rastafarians, and a corrupt, neo-colonial administration were integra-

ted into a story that said a lot about how reggae music acts as a release for repressed anger in a society close to boiling point. *The Harder They Come* was a combination of black gangster movie, third world protest film, and reggae documentary, but it worked, and it was the music and the power of Jimmy Cliff's performance that carried the most conviction.

Let The Good Times Roll was based on documentary footage of Richard Nader's rock & roll revival concerts at Madison Square Garden, with performances from Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Fats Domino, Little Richard, the Coasters and plenty of others. What was different about the film was the way it intercut the music with cinematic memories of the '50s: Marlon Brando snarling on his motorbike; a high school kid transformed into a werewolf while watching a nubile girl doing her gym exercises; Richard Nixon, 20 years younger, *still* explaining how much he loved America; and some city councillors discussing how to keep their town free

from the menace of rock & roll. Some of the editing devices became repetitive, but, viewed as a time capsule from the '50s, it was a great nostalgia trip.

The latest film to convey something powerful about rock music was also the simplest. *Jimi Hendrix*, a film by Joe Boyd, John Head and Gary Weis, assembles film of Hendrix's performances, and the memories of the girls and musicians who knew him well. Without straining after any effects, and without drowning in false piety for the dead guitar genius, the film contained a lot of amusing moments – such as Hendrix coolly strolling on to Dick Cavett's TV show in a rainbow-coloured mini-kimono – and throughout it treated the memory of the man with the warmth and dignity of the man himself. *Jimi Hendrix* was also one of the few films that successfully said what so many movies have tried to do less successfully: that the world of rock music is not a depraved sex circus, or a revolutionary plot, . . . but a bunch of people interested in making music.

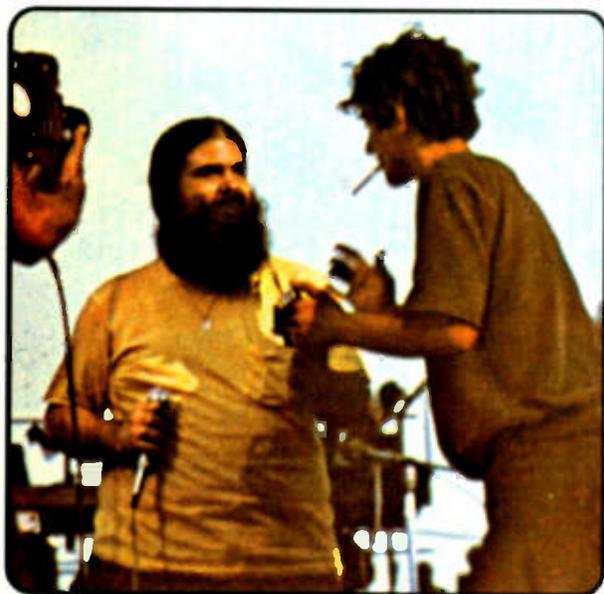


Supreme Film Distributors



Columbia Pictures

Jimmy Cliff and a lovely girl in *The Harder They Come*. Jack Nicholson and Peter Fonda in *Easy Rider*.



Warner Bros



Bob Hite, the 'Bear' from Canned Heat, was there. *Woodstock* through the eyes of middle-aged America,



Columbia Warner

Piano-playing Fats Domino in a happy moment and Chuck Berry sliding into the splits from *Let The Good Times Roll*.

NEXT WEEK IN POP CULTURE: Youth in revolt.

Talking 'bout my generation

SPACE ODDITY

by David Bowie

*Ground control to Major Tom,
Ground control to Major Tom:
Take your protein pills and put your helmet
on.*

*Ground control to Major Tom:
Commencing count down:
Engines on.*

*Check ignition and may God's love be with
you.*

*This is ground control to Major Tom;
You've really made the grade!
And the papers want to know whose shirts
you wear.*

*Now it's time to leave the capsule if you
dare.*

For here am I sitting in a tin can.

*Far above the world
Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing
I can do.*

*This is Major Tom to ground control;
I'm stepping thro' the door,
And I'm floating in a most peculiar way.
And the stars look very different today
Here am I floating round my tin can.*

*Far above the moon
Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing
I can do.*

*Though I'm past one hundred thousand
miles
I'm feeling very still
And I think my space-ship knows which
way to go
Tell my wife I love her very much. 'She
knows'.*

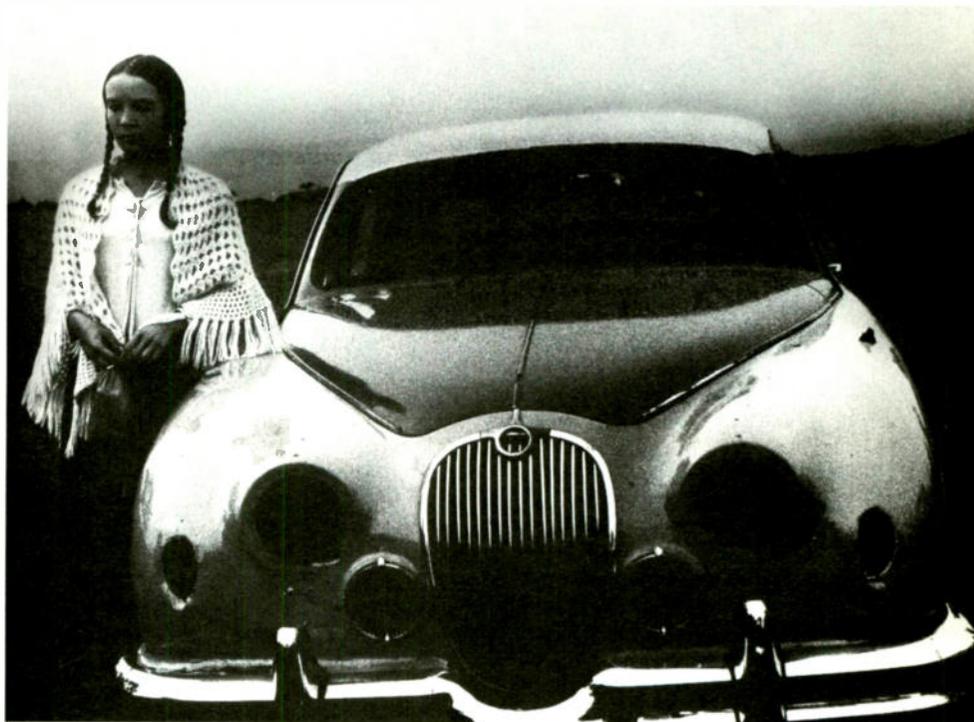
*Ground control to Major Tom:
Your circuit's dead.*

*There's something wrong.
Can you hear me Major Tom?
Can you hear me Major Tom?
Can you hear me Major Tom?*

© 1969 Essex Music International

As the generation and the life-style changed, so did the music and the subject matter of the lyrics. These two songs, separated by about two years, show how things developed. Bowie's 'Space Oddity' was a new sort of rock song entirely and one that owed little if anything to things before. Bolan's 'Get It On' was a love song – but totally different to those that had preceded it.

'Space Oddity' was influenced not by earlier music but by the stunning possibilities of the movie '2001'. The vastness of Stanley Kubrick's imaginative production is very nearly created entirely in sound. The subject matter is straight from the news headlines but the treatment (the single was in stereo), the dialogue, the tragedy, the ethereal feeling of weightlessness were triumphantly conjured in a few words, some music and good production and engineering. A few years before, this would have



Rob Burt

GET IT ON

by Marc Bolan

*Well you're dirty and sweet
Clad in black
Don't look back
And I love you
You're dirty and sweet oh yea.*

*Well you're slim and you're weak
You got the teeth
Of the Hydra upon you
You're dirty sweet
And you're my girl.*

*Get It On
Bang a gong
Get It On.*

*You're built like a car
You got a hubcap
Diamond star halo*

*You're built like a car
Oh yea.*

*You're an untamed youth
That's the truth
With your cloak full of eagles
You're dirty sweet
And you're my girl.*

*Well you're windy and wild
You got the blues
I'm your shoes and your stockings
You're windy and wild
Oh yea.*

*You're built like a car
You got a hubcap
Diamond star halo
You're dirty sweet
And you're my girl.*

© 1972 Essex Music International

been no more than a 'novelty' number, hardly different to something from the Chipmunks. Bowie, quite unexpectedly, did that rarest of all things – made a stunning, unique record.

Bolan's 'Get It On' cannot claim anything of the sort but it is a blockbuster. The music is reworked from rock & roll, the lyrics seem, when heard, trite but upon inspection show a puzzlingly obscure mind at work. Where before the girl's eyes would have been blue, perhaps, now she is mystically cloaked 'full of eagles'. She's no teen goddess because she's sweet and *dirty* AND she's built like a car! Streamlined, fast, sleek, shiny, SEXY. Above all Bolan's girl epitomises sex. Evil-sexy, sweet-sexy, cannibal-sexy, wild-sexy. Heavenly and hellish all at once, a fantasy figure from the erotic imagination that owes nothing to the Donnas, Peggy-Sues or Angela Jones' of previous decades.



BLACK MUSIC: 1968–74

Psychedelic Soul

By 1967, soul music had never enjoyed greater popularity. Stax and Tamla tours continued to play to packed houses, soul records received airplay and sales unthinkable only a few years previously, and at grassroots level a multitude of groups churned out 'Knock On Wood' and other standards to a seemingly untiring audience.

But this apparent popularity of soul with the white audience was short-lived, and soon crumbled under the onslaught of the many-headed hydra of 'psychedelia' and 'progressive' rock, which was to show only too clearly the stagnation of soul. The charts might bristle with Tamla singles, but in the main soul music became trapped hopelessly in its own clichés, its vitality sapped by its growing self-consciousness.

Of course, good records continued to be made. Aretha Franklin was offering inspired versions of a variety of songs, while a host of lesser artists refined and developed the gospel style that was the currency of soul music. The Deep South

continued to produce singers that lacked little in emotion and feeling, while in Philadelphia, Leon Huff and Kenny Gamble were laying the foundations of their immensely successful careers, working on their soft, smooth 'Philly Sound'.

In the main though, inventiveness and originality were scorned in favour of tried-and-tested formulas that had won soul recognition in the first place. The same old arrangements, usually Memphis or Muscle Shoals imitations, were dragged out and dusted down to adorn the predictable 'sock-it-to-me' vocal style; rhythm sections were rarely called on to bat out anything more complex than a danceable 4/4 plod. With one or two important exceptions, new artists were conspicuous by their absence.

In contrast, white musicians were exploring their own potential to an unparalleled extent. Dylan, the Beatles, the Stones, and others had shown that the time of mimicking black styles, and reciting teenage nursery rhymes about 'love' were long gone. A new maturity of approach was evident everywhere, which together with the use of sophisticated electronic equipment sounded the death knell for the 'sock-it-to-me' days. Compared to the

thundering interstellar stroboscopic overdrive of Pink Floyd on stage, or the erotic drama of Jim Morrison, the sight of Arthur Conley in his fluorescent mohair suit singing 'bout that 'Sweet Soul Music' suddenly seemed very *passé*. Even the sweetest riffs of the Memphis Horns were sadly earthbound in comparison to the electric savagery of Hendrix.

'Golden Age Of Soul'

For much of the white audience, soul music died a death too swift to be even dignified. In the discos it lived on, but the soul audience in general stopped dancing in time to the beat (what was left of it), and sat down to shake their heads into stoned oblivion to Clapton or even Ravi Shankar. The death of Otis Redding in December '67 seemed to mark the end of an era, his posthumous reputation becoming a monument to the 'Golden Age Of Soul'. Redding had appeared at the Monterey Free Festival in '67 along with the best of the psychedelic surge, and though he got the respect for which he pleaded among the hippie tribes, he seemed strangely out of place amid an audience already shuffling their feet for acid rock.

The significance of the new developments in rock at first escaped the soul business, which contentedly marked time. Among the few artists to take note of what was happening was Sly Stone, who fused rock and soul to create a new, vital music with hits like 'Dance To The Music'. In general though, black audiences, who still valued dancing and 'good times', dismissed psychedelia as yet another white fad.

This was perhaps not so surprising. There was little in the psychedelic package to appeal to black audiences. It was one thing for middle-class white kids to talk of 'dropping out', quite another to make ends meet in the ghetto. Anthems to grass and the mystical experiences of LSD got short shrift on the black hipster circuit.

Moreover, the whole West Coast hippie acid dream blithely ignored the chronic conditions in the ghettos of the large US cities – and the consequent need for political action – at just the time when black militancy was in the ascendant. The Watts riots weren't far behind, and while various 'flower power' groups sang eulogies to San Francisco, just across the bay in Oakland, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale were cleaning down their rifles and establishing the Black Panther Party. Clearly *they'd* not be pressing flowers on any policemen.

In short, hippie philosophy held little relevance for a black population increasingly concerned with social change in the here and now. Not that white psychedelia was without its effects on black musical and cultural circles; the 'Uncle Tom' image that soul suddenly acquired in comparison was embarrassing to many blacks. Ghetto chic, armed with the phrase 'Black Is Beautiful', began to exhibit the same technicolour rash, with kaftans spurned for afro-ropes, and the mushrooming of afro haircuts (or 'naturals'). The Temptations, for example, swapped their uniform tuxedos for an array of 'freaky' clothing that suggested unorthodoxy and rebellion.

Sexual Overtones

The new sense of black pride and the quest for black identity naturally found expression in the music as well as the image. Protest had always been implicit in the energy and attack of soul, and in its sexual overtones (the Stones' 'Street Fighting Man' leant heavily on Martha and the Vandellas' 'Dancing In The Street' for example). Now, following the lead of Sly Stone, lyrics became socially slanted, dealing with the black man's condition in overt terms. The Temptations, by now under the guidance of producer Norman Whitfield, recorded numbers like 'Runaway Child Running Wild', 'Cloud Nine', and later 'Ball Of Confusion', a lead followed by the Supremes with 'Love Child'. Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions were another group who moved away from straight soul toward social comment in numbers like 'Mighty Mighty Spade And Whitey'; while the Chilites' '(For God's Sake) You Got To



SKK

Billy Preston, one of the rare artists to appear on a Beatles' single.

Give More Power To The People' was one of the best singles in the idiom before it became widely exploited in the 1970s.

Together with the new idealism of the lyrics went an unequivocally electric approach to the music, drawing on the Pandora's Box of electronic machismo opened by rock musicians. Guitars were no longer merely part of the rhythm section, they took lead lines, using a variety of fuzz-box and wah-wah effects. Fender electric pianos chortled funkily alongside them, while the increasingly strident and assertive sound began to subdue even the all-important vocals. The three-minute number expanded to seven, eight minutes, and even whole album sides as production standards rose steadily.

Not all the efforts in this new vein were convincing. There tended to be a strong tendency toward moral overstatement, and what were complex social/political issues were often dealt with in engagingly banal terms, as in Edwin Starr's 1970 hit 'War' (another Norman Whitfield production). The music was often self-consciously 'progressive', with little real feeling, and at least one group, the Chambers Brothers, failed to attract despite considerable music business hype.

By the 1970s there was a whole breed of bands straddling the worlds of rock and soul; often interracial, they adopted a rock line-up and delivered a brash, high-

energy sound which was soon labelled 'funkadelic'. War, Kool and the Gang, Cymande, Tower of Power, the Fat Back Band and others all exhibited a similar approach, often leaning heavily on the pioneer work of Sly and the Family Stone, who remained easily the most impressive and innovatory of them all.

West Coast Imitation

Sly Stone, real name Sylvester Stewart, almost singlehandedly redefined the potential of soul. Taking up music at the age of four, he had worked as a producer for Autumn records at the age of 19, producing dance singer Bobby Freeman ('C'Mon And Swim') and a West Coast imitation of the 'British Sound', the Beau Brummels. Following a spell as a top DJ, he formed the Family Stone in early '67, an intersexual, interracial outfit that included Sly's sister Rosie on piano, and brother Freddie on guitar. Also in the early line-up were Cynthia Robinson (trumpet), Rusty Allen (bass), Andy Neumark (drums), and Jerry Martini and Pat Rizzo (saxes).

Early hits like 'M'Lady' and 'Life' established the Sly style as a hybrid of musical forms, mixing together acid rock guitar, fluent jazz horn phrasing, and a heavily-stated James Brown rhythm into a unique fusion. An accomplished producer as well as a masterful musician, the complex



Earth, Wind & Fire's music portrays the mood of many of the ghettos in the '70s.

arrangements Sly formulated for his songs rendered traditional ideas about the separate roles of band and vocals obsolete. Instrumentals constantly alternated their function as rhythm or lead sections, and in numbers like 'Hot Fun In The Summer-time' and 'Thankyou For Lettin' Me Be Mice Elf Again' the different textures of the vocals were played off against each other in a fascinating oscillation between high/low, male/female, and solo/chorus.

From the early dance hall style of 'Dance To The Music', Sly's material edged toward social commitment in numbers like 'Stand', 'Don't Call Me Nigger Whitey', and 'Everyday People', numbers which avoided the trite and simplistic, and which hinted at the complex web of relationships that existed between the individual, race, and society at large.

Sly himself remained a complex and often obscure personality, an apparently separate entity from Sylvester Stewart, and while he projected an image of brazen freakiness garbed in the most outlandish and garish apparel, he remained aloof and withdrawn from his public, speaking in oblique, unpredictable references.

Though exceedingly popular with black audiences – not least because of the compulsive danceability of his music – Sly also held strong appeal for white hip audiences too, and the Family Stone began

to be heavily booked at white rock venues, culminating in 1969 with their appearance at the Woodstock Festival, where they equalled and outshone the cream of the rock world with their rousing and spectacular performance of 'I Wanna Take You Higher'.

Gig Failures

This appearance preceded a period of apparent disintegration, with fluctuations in line-up, failures to appear, and ludicrously short sets when they did. Sly became a virtual recluse, and there were rumours of drug problems, while CBS were alleged to have offered him \$1,000,000 to make another album.

Whatever the reality of this offer, the silence was broken in 1971 by the ironically titled 'There's A Riot Goin' On', in which the band's former energy had dissipated into an attitude of laid-back, phased-out funkiness. Rhythms were increasingly bumpy, the melody constantly threatened with extinction by the all-pervasive, loping bass lines. The vocals, at times barely distinguishable, became sardonic, paranoiac observations. The general pessimism of 'Riot' made it no less a masterpiece, and it furnished two hit singles – 'Family Affair' and 'Running Away' – the former typifying the incestuous, downward spiral of the album.

After this there was silence for 18 months, when 'Fresh' appeared – seemingly an upward swing from the depths of lethargy plumbed by 'Riot'. Still, the mood remained ambiguous, and despite statements like 'If it were left up to me I would try' and 'I've taken my chances I could have been dead', the music remained low-energy, the band mixed way back behind the stabbing, contradictory rhythms.

Sometimes derided by straight soul fans, the enigmatic figure of Sly remains central to '70s soul, in some respects more like a rock star than a soul star, an explorer of the drug-sodden byways of inner space rather than a performer celebrating the traditional themes of love and good times. Nonetheless, he remains unchallenged as a street poet lyricist, and as a trailblazer of the funkadelic frontier.

Not that Sly has been the only innovator. While a new generation of producers like Gamble/Huff, with high-flying vocal groups like the O'Jays and Harold Melvin and the Bluenotes, took soul into a softer, more orchestrated groove, others were returning to fundamentals for effect. The still omnipotent but ageing, self-styled 'Godfather of Soul', James Brown, refined his mid-'60s style – raucous and rhythmic – to devastating effect on numbers like 'Make It Funky', 'Hot Pants', 'Give It Up Or Turn It Loose', and a host of others.

Brown's rhythms became ever funkier and tighter, with bass, drums, super-tremoloed guitar and horns all counterposed in a crossfire of warring rhythms over which Brown interjected furious screams and crowed his skeletal vocal lines. His backing group of Fred Wesley and the JBs meantime began to score with instrumental hits of their own like 'Doin' It To Death' and 'Pass The Peas', and their percussive superfunk was widely imitated by groups like the Ohio Players with 'Funky Worm' and Kool and the Gang with 'Funky Stuff'. Mandrill, the Fat Back Band, and Maceo and the King's Men also swelled the ranks of the funk bands.

Two Album Partnership

War were among the best of the new groups offering electric funk. A seven-piece outfit, several of the group had met at high school, though it was not until 1968 that the group formed proper and called themselves the Night Shift. Seen by Eric Burdon in 1969, they changed tag and backed him in a two year, two album partnership that notched up Gold sales for the single, 'Spill The Wine', and achieved a measure of success and critical recognition with their albums 'War' and 'All Day Music'. It was, however, the 1973 album, 'The World Is A Ghetto', which finally sealed their success, and brought them Gold sales along with the single, 'Cisco Kid', culled from it. 'Cisco Kid' was an uptempo blues shouter, with choppy Santana-like rhythms, but a good deal of the group's material was slow, ponderous, and bordering on the dirge-like – the psychotically-chanted 'Four Corned Room' for example. No doubt the depressive, deliberately

At a time when militancy was rising, Curtis Mayfield moved away from straight soul.

bleary musical portrait the group play out on 'Ghetto' accurately charted the mood of many of the ghettos' inhabitants in the '70s, but at times it seemed lacklustre jazz. With relatively weak vocals, the group's strength lies primarily in its instrumental versatility, not only the permutations allowed by the line-up, but their willingness to collaborate for a richly-textured total sound.

Most of the other groups following in the footsteps of War – Earth Wind and Fire and Tower of Power for example – have so far failed to offer a distinctive sound, though afro-rock/soul looms promisingly on the musical horizon, as evidenced by the hit 'Soul Makossa' of Manu Dibango early in 1973.

The tendency toward rock-styled line-ups has also engulfed established soul artists, so that the hallowed trio of the Isley Brothers, who pioneered soul with their 1958 'Shout', are now six strong, with three musicianly brothers added to their line-up for the album '3+3', which supplied their comeback hit 'That Lady'. The style of 'That Lady' is in fact predated by several years by their 1968 'It's Your Thing', which received some critical lambasting at the time.

Other soul artists have recorded a variety of straight rock material, often with considerable commercial success (like Wilson Pickett's 'Hey Jude'). Ike and Tina Turner in particular seem to have almost crossed the divide completely with their 'Working Together' and 'What You Hear Is What You Get' sets. Though Ike has also reaffirmed his blues roots recently with a fine solo album, 'Blues Roots', he continues to offer adventurous productions often working with synthesisers, as on the 1973 hit 'Nutbush City Limits'.

Ike and Tina toured Britain with the Stones in 1969, a feat duplicated by another veteran soul performer, Billy Preston, in 1973, four years after he teamed up as the Beatles' sidekick and recorded 'That's The Way God Planned It'. His appearance at the Free Concert For Bangladesh in 1970 added to his reputation with the rock audience, and he has been rewarded with several hit singles – some of them instrumentals like 'Outspace' – while his albums have become increasingly diverse in their musical approach. His present line-up of a three keyboard band is interesting, but at the same time musically limiting.

It's probably as unprofitable as it is difficult to draw the line between rock and soul in the '70s, though once soul artists are successful, there's a tendency for the rock press and audience to claim they're no longer soul. Nonetheless, in the early '70s it seems that black music, after a period of recession during the late '60s, has once again started to set the musical pace and win back the audience that defected back at the end of the '60s – since which time black music has diversified considerably.



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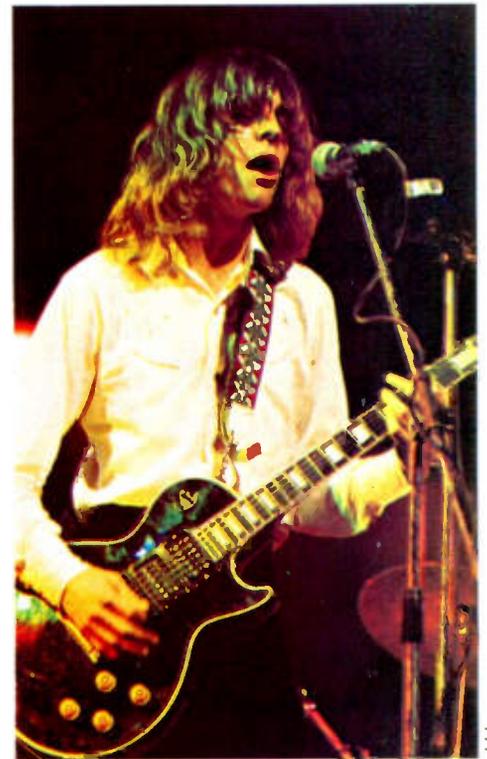
Right: The big supergroup after Cream, was Blind Faith. It was Steve Winwood on organ, Ginger Baker on drums and Eric Clapton on guitar. Below: Beck, Bogert & Appice had the moody and unpredictable Jeff Beck on lead guitar, Carmine Appice on drums and Tim Bogert on bass. Centre right: One of the first pretty rock stars, Peter Frampton was originally with the Herd, which he left to join Stevie Marriott's Humble Pie. He later formed his own group, called Frampton's Camel. Bottom: Ginger Baker's Airforce included such musicians as Denny Laine, on guitar, (now with Wings, originally with the Moody Blues); Steve Winwood, playing mostly organ; Rick Grech on bass (prior to this, with Blind Faith and Family); Graham Bond, soprano sax and organ and, of course, Ginger Baker on drums.



SKR



Redferns



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assumed, a group involving several celebrated musicians has a much larger ready-made audience than most 'new' bands, and can therefore command extraordinary fees compared to the money that an average band of newcomers can expect to earn.

One such band that bombed was a group formed by Noel Redding in 1969. Redding had been the bass player in the Jimi Hendrix Experience, and thus there was considerable interest in his future activities once he left Hendrix. He formed a group named Fat Mattress, which featured himself on guitar, plus drummer Eric Dillon, vocalist Neil Landon and bassist James Leverton. Polydor is said to have paid the band \$175,000 in advance royalties, and then launched them with a flourish. Sadly, Fat Mattress didn't earn anything like that amount, and there was failure all round. Redding left the group halfway through the recording of their second album, and the group eventually collapsed.

One highly touted supergroup that did manage both to stay together and to make a lot of money was Emerson, Lake and Palmer. The reason that they've done it is that, commercially at least, they've never put a foot wrong. They played exactly the music that their pre-sold audience would want, they had a musical direction that did not stimulate divisiveness, they handled their business well, and if any member of the group got jealous of any other member they sorted it all out in private. In fact, ELP have avoided most of the pitfalls that, by tradition and precedent, supergroups have fallen into. The simple fact of their survival testifies to that.

Another 'supergroup' that may well survive is Beck, Bogert & Appice, the group formed by Jeff Beck and the rhythm section of the now-disbanded Vanilla Fudge – Carmine Appice (drums) and Tim Bogert (bass). All three musicians play together with a power and vigour that hasn't been heard in their playing for some years, and it would seem that in each other they have found the colleagues best suited to play the kind of music that they're currently playing.

The Music Goes On

Still, the supergroup fad appears to be blowing over. What is happening instead is that the groups are older now, they've been around longer, and they know more people. So, if one band loses a member, or if somebody decides to form a group, it's more than likely that a well-known name or two will be included, simply because it beats auditioning 400 unknowns. Thus when Woody Woodmansey left the Spiders from Mars to become a full-time scientologist, he was replaced by Aynsley Dunbar, late of everybody from Frank Zappa to John Mayall to the Bonzo Dog Band, and former leader of the Retaliation and Blue Whale. Equally, when Mick Ralphs left Mott the Hoople, he was replaced by Ariel Bender, who happens to be Luthor Grosvenor, former guitarist for Spooky Tooth and Stealer's Wheel. And where did Ralphs go to? Well, he went to play guitar for the new Free, along with vocalist Paul Rodgers, drummer Simon Kirke and bassist Boz – who had previously replaced Tetsu – who replaced Andy Fraser – who left Free and ended up form-

ing Sharks with Chris Spedding . . .

The beat goes on. There was Airforce, a huge and catastrophic big band formed by Ginger Baker after he had left Blind Faith. It included such notables as Stevie Winwood, Rick Grech, and Graham Bond, and yet as *Rolling Stone's* review of their first album pointed out: 'everybody concerned has played better almost anywhere'.

On the other hand, there's the strange case of Yes, who became a supergroup almost by osmosis. They started out with a basic line-up of Jon Anderson (vocals), Peter Banks (guitar), Chris Squire (bass), Tony Kaye (keyboards) and Bill Bruford (drums). Well, first Banks left to be replaced by Steve Howe, late of Tomorrow. Then Tony Kaye was replaced by Rick Wakeman, late of the Strawbs, and then finally Bill Bruford left to join King Crimson (where he played alongside John Wetton, formerly of Family), and was replaced by Alan White, who'd played drums for the Plastic Ono Band.

At times, rock & roll looks like a colossal game of musical chairs. And for the sake of illustration this analysis only looks at the *British* groups. In the end, apart from keeping a lot of rock writers in work and fascinating and/or astounding those with long memories or large record collections, the 'supergroup' phenomenon as it was around the time of the '60s – when magic was in the air and just about anything or everything was expected of rock musicians – has been overtaken by events. Now, almost any group that forms will carry legends and reputations with it and once again it's down to the music they can make together. The beat, and musical chairs, goes on . . . and on . . . and on . . .

The Nice (minus guitarist David O'List). Left to right: Organist, Keith Emerson, bass player Lee Jackson and drummer Blinky Davison.



J. Kingaby

Led Zeppelin

Masters of Heavy Rock

Led Zeppelin are a 'supergroup' in every sense of the word. Since 1968, when they first came together, they have broken box-office records everywhere and have sold more than 10,000,000 LPs.

They now command more than £25,000 for a concert in the States, are the epitome of heavy rock, and the acknowledged masters of the cacophonous crescendo.

They consist of the near legendary skill of Jimmy Page on guitar, the giant voice of Robert 'Percy' Plant, the manic thrashing of John 'Bonzo' Bonham on drums, and the swirling punch of John Paul Jones (alias John Baldwin) on bass guitar. The climax of Zeppelin's 1973 US tour was a series of three concerts at New York's Madison Square Garden, pulling an audience of 25,000 people at each concert.

The Garden Explodes

At each of the performances, the Garden was absolutely jam-packed inside and out, and the group had to be wheeled into the bowels of the stadium through a heavily guarded and barricaded entrance. The group sat around relaxing until the enormous frame of manager Peter Grant pushed through the dressing-room door to bawl that the show must start. So, greeted by a huge roar from the audience, the band appeared on stage. The lights went up and a solid, unremitting wave of sound soared out from the massive PA set-up, wrenching at the audience's viscera. Plant's voice, sounding as if amplification was unnecessary, carefully manipulated the listeners, lifting them gently through a verse to bring them hurtling down with a crash of drums and guitars which escalated to an almost unbearable pitch. They were left stunned and silent in the brief respite before the next chorus. Page effortlessly churned out an intricate but weighty solo, his hands moving in a blur of speed, throwing out pattern after pattern of electrifying noise.

Alternating the mood between savage gut-rock and tender love song, Led Zeppelin pummeled their way through nearly three hours of non-stop music, and though the mood may have changed, the tension certainly didn't. But it wasn't just a case of volume and dynamics. Unlike many

other contenders to the rock throne, the solidity of their music is created by a carefully woven, complete, and resilient net of musical variation in which loudness is only used as a means of contrast. The stadium thundered with applause for a full 15 minutes before the band came back for the first of their two encores. Though they put on a dazzling visual show, their musical expertise was the most potent weapon in their arsenal, and the show a breathtaking climax to a magnificent tour.

Jimmy Page is often regarded as the musical 'nemesis' of Zeppelin, a quiet and withdrawn character famed for his silent strength and emotion, emotion that only shows in his immaculate guitar style. His musical pedigree is perhaps the longest and most diverse of all the members of the band. During the early '60s, Page left school and joined Neil Christian's Crusaders, touring Britain on a continuous cycle of one-nighters until the strain made him ill. He then split to art college, playing at London's Marquee Club in an 'interval band'. There he was spotted, and then followed several years of session work, playing on sessions for the Who, the Kinks, and a multitude of records by nearly every major British artist and act. In 1965, Jimmy worked as a producer for the Immediate label, producing John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton on lead guitar. A double-album of unfinished material recorded at Jimmy's house, featuring Jimmy and Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones, and the Cyril Davies' All-Stars, was released by Immediate in 1969, after Zeppelin had become famous.

Though he had turned down the job of replacing Eric Clapton as lead guitarist in the Yardbirds when Clapton left to join the Bluesbreakers, in July '66 Jimmy joined as bass player when Paul Samwell-Smith left. Though he had never played bass on stage before, he knew most of the group's material as he had been a friend of theirs for some time. Then, during a tour of the States, lead guitarist Jeff Beck was taken ill and Jimmy had the nerve-wracking job of standing in for him. It went so well that he and Jeff became possibly the first twin-lead players, setting audiences aflame during the Stones/Yardbirds US tour in September '66. Unfortunately, the partnership didn't last long as Beck left at the end of the year, and recordings of the group with two lead guitarists are now very rare. Jimmy stayed on until the Yardbirds, disillusioned split in July '68.

Determined that the Yardbirds shouldn't disappear without trace, Jimmy and Chris Dreja (the Yardbirds' bass player) set out to find musicians to form the New Yardbirds. The new group was originally intended to consist of Jimmy on guitar, Dreja on bass, Terry Reid (then lead singer with Peter Jay and the Jay Walkers) as lead vocalist, and drummer Paul Francis. Reid, now a well-known solo artist, had at the time just been signed as a solo singer to Mickie Most and couldn't join. Instead, he suggested a singer called Robert Plant who had been in the highly-rated Band Of Joy. Jimmy went to hear 'Percy' Plant singing with a band called Obbstweedle, and knew he was the one. An old friend from Robert's Band of Joy days, 'Bonzo' Bonham, was thinking of leaving Tim Rose's backing band, and Jimmy also went to see him play. "When I saw what a thrasher Bonzo was, I knew he'd be incredible . . . He was into exactly the same sort of stuff as I was." The line-up for the New Yardbirds was by now almost complete.

Always rather torn in career terms, Chris Dreja decided to emigrate to the States to become a photographer (he took the back-cover shot on Led Zeppelin's first album), and ex-Jet Harris player and famous session-man John Paul Jones was brought in to play bass and keyboards. It was after their first tour, of Scandinavia, that the group decided to drop the 'New Yardbirds' name, as only one of the band had actually played in the original group. So, in October 1968 they adopted a name that Who drummer Keith Moon had thought up, and Led Zeppelin came into being. Their very first concert in London won them two encores, two standing ovations, and massive plaudits from the pop press. They had arrived.

Sexual Lyrics

The first album, 'Led Zeppelin' was released in early 1969 and confirmed that the group were more than able to transcend the gap between stage and disc. It had been recorded in only 30 hours, less than five weeks after the group had been formed. That is difficult to imagine when one listens to the superb tightness of the sound and the masterful production. Ace engineer Glyn Johns (also engineer of the Faces' albums) must take much of the credit as must Jimmy Page, the album's producer. The album was centred around aggressive rock with predominately sexual lyrics, with Page's clinically eclectic, but nevertheless brilliant, guitar playing standing out. One oddity aspect was the inclusion of 'Black Mountain Side', an acoustic steel-strung guitar number reminiscent of Bert Jansch (a fabled acoustic player who became even better known as part of the Pentangle folk group).

Though the band's album sales have always been extremely healthy, they decided very early on not to release any singles in Britain, and to keep an equal emphasis on playing live gigs. Under the

expert wing of their manager, the band managed to combine one of the most energetic and successful tour careers with the regular output of one album a year. They played to sell-out venues all over the world and appeared every year at the top of the various pop polls. But the public and press were not always on their side. Their second album, 'Led Zeppelin II', released in August 1970, continued to develop the directness and power of the first, and numbers like 'Whole Lotta Love' and 'The Lemon Song' have since become classics of heavy rock. Their third album, 'Led Zeppelin III', was released only a few months later and contained, in contrast, a number of laid-back songs and several traditional folk songs written at the group's Welsh hide-out. This album, though, was well and truly hammered by the press, and for a time the group became very despondent about the whole thing.

A year later, with a couple of highly successful tours under their belts, the group braced themselves to make another LP. This time they wanted to prove that they could still be successful on record as well as on live gigs. They decided to completely play-down the group, and the LP appeared without even the printers' name on the cover. Instead of a title, the group set a precedent by using four runic symbols, each representing the personality of a member of the band. The album was released in November 1971 and, contrary to the beliefs of many who thought they were committing professional suicide, the LP was a hit and even the pop press had to admit that numbers like 'Stairway To Heaven' were indeed musically unsurpassable, and that the band had succeeded in living up to its reputation.

It was this uneasy relationship with the press – based on the apparently arrogant refusal of the band to co-operate – and some justified comments concerning the band's originality and cynicism, that led to much of their great success as a live band being ignored. During their mammoth tour of the States in 1972, the Rolling Stones had also arrived there and, as Page says: "Who wanted to know that Zeppelin had broken the all-time attendance record at such-and-such a place when they could get shots of Mick Jagger talking to Truman Capote?" As a result, Zeppelin lost out in the publicity stakes, and their tour work was largely overlooked.

In May, 1973, their album, 'Houses Of the Holy', was released . . . and the controversy started all over again. The critics were sharply divided between those who liked Zeppelin and liked the album, those who didn't like Zeppelin and didn't like the album, those who liked Zeppelin but didn't like the album, and the vast majority who weren't sure about the album but appreciated that Zeppelin were a great group that they'd followed for years. True, the album was certainly different from much of their previous work (it even featured string arrangements in places), and the melody side took precedence over the rhythm patterns on several tracks, but

Chris Walter



Robert Failla





Roger Marriot
Centre: Jeffrey Mayer

their hard rock ability still showed through.

Of much greater importance to the band and the hundreds of thousands that have seen them perform, is that the apparent loss in momentum as far as recording is concerned is contradicted by the increase in their vitality at live concerts. Quite apart from box-office successes (they broke the world attendance figure for a single group when 58,000 people paid to watch them play at La Tampa in Florida), they seem to have reached an even greater degree of 'togetherness' on stage. The switching of John Paul Jones to playing more keyboards has added another dimension to their music and, as always, they still burn off fantastic amounts of energy at each performance.

Though their recording future may still be in some doubt their next album should resolve the issue, and either way there's little doubt that they will remain one of the most exciting live bands in the world.



Chris Walter

BACK TRACK

Jimmy Page joined Neil Christian's Crusaders on leaving school, but later went to art college. 'Spotted' playing at London's Marquee club and became a top session guitarist in the early '60s. By 1965 he was producing for the Immediate Label. In 1966 he joined the Yardbirds as bass player but switched to twin lead guitar with Jeff Beck for the Rolling Stones/Yardbirds tour of the States that year.

1968: The Yardbirds split up and Chris Dreja and Jimmy Page decide to form the New Yardbirds. Singer Terry Reid suggests Robert Plant as vocalist and Plant brings in John Bonham on drums, whom he'd met in the Band Of Joy. Dreja then decided to become a photographer and session musician John Paul Jones joined on bass.

After a tour of Scandinavia, the group dropped the name New Yardbirds and at Keith Moon's suggestion they became Led Zeppelin. First concert in London brought a standing ovation and immensely favourable press coverage.

1969, March: Led Zeppelin I album.

1970, August: Led Zeppelin II album.

1970, October: Led Zeppelin III album.

1971, November: UNTITLED (Led Zeppelin IV album).

Led Zeppelin's massive tour of the States in 1972 was overshadowed in the press by the return to the road of the Rolling Stones.

1973, May: Houses Of The Holy album.

The Supergroups

Only by consulting the yellowing backnumbers of the music papers could anyone who was interested enough ascertain which band's formation it was that first stimulated some enterprising journalist to coin the term 'supergroup'. Blind Faith? ELP? Judas Jump? It really doesn't matter. The generally accepted meaning of the word is 'a group of musicians containing one or more members previously well-known from other bands'.

The fact that very few of the so-called 'supergroups' have managed to produce any worthwhile music, and even fewer have been able to stay together for any considerable length of time, may slightly compromise the habitual over-use of the term that was prevalent around the late '60s and early '70s.

Though nobody was throwing the word around in 1966 when Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker first got together for a blow in Baker's front room, Cream were probably the prototype supergroup. When that band finally fell apart, in 1969, Clapton and Baker reappeared almost immediately in the company of Stevie Winwood (who had been distinguishing himself for four or five years with Traffic and the Spencer Davis Group) and Rick Grech (ex-Family) as half of a new group, Blind Faith. How easy, therefore, it was to cry 'supergroup' and sit back waiting for miracles.

Pipe Dreams

The trouble with Blind Faith was that they made an excellent if unspectacular album and then collapsed within months due to personal problems. It was disappointing that the group's life was so short, but what was almost universally ignored was that Titanic Talent A and Titanic Talent B may not have enough in common to produce music of commensurate worth to their status and abilities. Thus music writers fantasised about their ideal supergroups, and allowed their minds to dwell on what would happen if Paul McCartney formed a band with Alvin Lee, or if Mitch Mitchell ganged up with Keith Emerson, and so on *ad infinitum*, completely forgetting that musicians have to be compatible with each other to play together. And therein lies the rub.

The groups who founded second-generation British rock (which chronologically started with the Beatles) were generally aggregations of friends who got their kicks playing together locally. The best of them got rich and famous, like the Stones, the Who, the Yardbirds, the Animals, the Kinks, *etcetera*. As time went on, though, some of the musicians involved found that the reasons that had brought them into their original groups were no longer valid. Maybe there were personality differences, maybe they were no longer getting any musical satisfaction. Therefore, they moved on, in search of more congenial surroundings – musical environments in which they could be more creative. In some cases, they packed their bags and fled in order to found a group in which they could assert themselves as leaders without competition from their fellows. Others left to collaborate with musicians closer to their own weight. The paths of many musicians crossed, joined and parted, sometimes all in the space of a few months; and the following attempts to trace some of them.

In 1968, John Mayall made an album entitled 'Bare Wires', which featured a line-up of musicians including former Graham Bond Organisation members Jon Hiseman (drums) and Dick Heckstall-Smith (saxophones), guitarist Mick Taylor, bassist Tony Reeves, ex-Manfred Mann trumpeter and violinist Henry Lowther, and himself. Hiseman, Heckstall-Smith and Reeves went on to form Colosseum with guitarist James Litherland and keyboard player Dave Greenslade. Later on, Litherland was replaced by ex-Bakerloo guitarist Dave Clempson, Reeves by bassist Mark Clarke, and to top it all off, British R&B veteran Chris Farlowe joined up as lead vocalist. Supergroup?

Meanwhile, the Crazy World Of Arthur Brown was fragmenting during a traumatic American tour, and on returning to Britain, organist Vincent Crane and drummer Carl Palmer formed a new group – to be known as Atomic Rooster. The Rooster went through many changes before Chris Farlowe joined as vocalist, but one of its most important changes was when Carl Palmer left.

One of the major new groups of 1967 was the Nice. Originally backing group to singer P. P. Arnold, its members (Keith Emerson, keyboards; Lee Jackson, bass; Blinky Davison, drums and David O'List, guitar) struck out on their own. By late 1968, O'List had left, and by 1970 it had

become apparent that Jackson and Davison just couldn't keep up with Emerson. Emerson then teamed up with Greg Lake, who'd played bass in King Crimson and . . . Carl Palmer.

To backtrack once more. In 1969, leader, guitarist and principal composer of the Small Faces – Steve Marriott – decided that he wanted to play a heavier and more R&B-orientated music than his long-time colleagues Ronnie Lane (bass), Ian McLagan (keyboard) and Kenny Jones (drums). So off he went to form Humble Pie with guitarist/vocalist Peter Frampton, whose talent had largely gone unnoticed in his previous band, the Herd. Frampton eventually departed to be himself replaced by . . . Dave Clempson!

The Faces Were Born

Meanwhile, Rod Stewart, who'd been the singer with the Jeff Beck Group, Steampacket, and numerous other people before, and guitarist Ronnie Wood, who'd been the bass player in the Beck band alongside Stewart, left that band to join the remainder of the Small Faces. Thus was born the Faces, modified in 1973 by the replacement of Lane by Tetsu Yamauchi, a Japanese bass player who'd replaced ex-Mayall bassist Andy Fraser in a group that he'd founded called Free.

To reiterate the question, then, what *is* a supergroup? It could quite logically be stated that the Who is a supergroup, or that the Rolling Stones is a supergroup, or that Led Zeppelin is a supergroup – simply because they have proved to be consistently brilliant. On the other hand is, for example, West, Bruce and Laing a supergroup simply because its members have distinguished themselves elsewhere? Were Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young a supergroup – indeed, were they a group at all, or simply a collection of soloists hanging out together? After all, there was only one Crosby, Stills and Nash album and one Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young album of original material produced before they all went their separate ways once more.

Apart from the musical aspect and the ego aspect, another quite convincing reason for forming a supergroup is the increased money and status involved. When a group is being formed it generally needs to negotiate a recording contract, unless one or more of the musicians involved already has a deal with a record company. If they are signed to different companies, a horse-trade like the following can take place. When C S & N were in the formative stages, Stephen Stills was already signed to Atlantic as a holdover from his contract with Buffalo Springfield, David Crosby was contractually at liberty, while Graham Nash was still signed to Epic, the company for whom he had recorded as a member of the Hollies. So Atlantic got Nash, while in exchange Epic got Richie Furay, another ex-member of the Buffalo Springfield. Furay formed the very successful Poco, and both companies lived happily ever after. As may be readily

Lou Reed

Out of the Underground

"Good evening. We're called the Velvet Underground," Lou Reed introducing a Velvet's set at Max's Kansas City: "You're allowed to dance in case you don't know. This is called 'I'm Waiting For The Man', a tender folk song from the '50s – about love between man and subway. I'm sure you'll enjoy it."

Lou Reed on songwriting: "I write through the eyes of somebody else. I'm always checking out people I know, and then I write songs about them, and then I *become* them. When I'm not doing anything I become kinda empty."

Lou Reed is in many ways music's man of the '70s. He had the good fortune to realise this in 1966 and still be around in 1972 when the rest of the world finally caught up. Like his close friend David Bowie, Reed managed to weld together meaningful lyrics, down-the-line rock, and an intensely theatrical stage presence. All this, and as well, he at last managed to throw all the cloying 'underground' image which had for so long prevented his music from reaching 'overground' audiences.

The moment Andy Warhol sprang the Velvet Underground on an unsuspecting and unprepared world, Reed was branded weird, outrageous and decadent. He is.

Middle-Class Graduate

Contrary to the public image, he wasn't born and bred in a New York street gang. His childhood was spent in the midst of a middle-class family who supplied his every need, as the saying goes. When he did move from New York State to the city it was to the university not the subway scene. He emerged with a B.A.; a love-hate relationship with the city; and a powerful curiosity kindled by the scene springing up in New York in the mid-'60s.

Reed said on 'Loaded', the final Velvet Underground album, "It's the beginning of our new age." Neon was everyone's favourite colour, Jackson Pollock and Allen Ginsberg were *passé*, and the black leather, bi-sexual drug culture was coming to the surface. Reed, straight out



Roger Perry

of school, was working as a professional songwriter – hammering out a couple of surfing songs before lunch and, as an extra, a couple of hot-rod songs and a ballad.

For Lou it was waiting time, a time that ended when he wrote a song called 'The Ostrich'. That same day he picked up a copy of the *Herald Tribune*, turned to the fashion pages and discovered that ostrich feathers were in vogue – it was the cue he needed.

He called up *Vogue* magazine, told them about his song, and arranged a photo session. In 1965, young musicians with long hair were still good value and *Vogue* jumped, just like Reed knew they would. Now all he had to do was find a band. And the musicians he called up for the photo session included a young expatriate Welshman called John Cale. The group quickly recorded the song and even took a trip to Philadelphia to lay it down for the *Dick Clark Show*. Nothing came of the song, but for Reed and Cale it was the

Velvet Underground's inspiration.

For Reed to have his own band was nothing new. The first one was the Shades, put together when he was just 14 and the lead singer needed a stool to reach the microphone. But with Cale, Lou for the first time progressed beyond the teenage hoodlum era. With Mo Tucker, Sterling Morrison and later Nico, Reed in fact formulated a whole new school of rock.

The legend came later. First the Velvet Underground had to work through their apprenticeship. Their first gig – in a New Jersey high school – netted them 75 dollars, and half their audience walked out on them. Then came the break. They began to play a sort of residency at the Café Bizarre, attracting an audience of New York's avant-garde. One night a member of that audience was film director/producer Barbara Rubin, who was from then on constantly hustling her friends down to see the leather band who played with feedback 'like they'd been suckled on it'.

One of those friends was poet Gerard



Malanga, who just happened to be a close friend of New York's latest and brightest superstar, Andy Warhol. Malanga flipped to the band, and as Warhol was running a week of films at the Film-makers' Cinematheque, Malanga decided it would be a good idea to have these weird wonders playing behind the films. He convinced Andy, and the Velvet Underground was launched.

The group soon went on to become part of *Andy Warhol's Plastic Exploding Inevitable*, a complete art form which struck at all the senses. That this sort of thing could probably never occur again is in no way to detract from what was in the mid-'60s an extraordinary event – mobiles floating everywhere, and members of the Warhol troupe moving round the audience, infiltrating as many minds as possible. Reed and the band played their brash, electric music dressed in black leather and wearing shades to avoid damaging their eyes on the light-show which played all over their bodies.

The impact of the event made it a success. The '70s would no doubt label the Velvet Underground and the whole *Plastic Inevitable* scene as mere high-energy rock & roll – and that's what it was – but then even the most freaked of New York crowds viewed it as a unique occurrence – *a happening*.

Incredible Material

For a time, it was interesting enough for Lou. Then it started to become just another job. Nico split, and Reed and Cale decided it was time that they and Warhol parted company. By now they had a recording contract, and the Velvet Underground were becoming a name in their own right. Both Lou and John were writing some incredible material – 'Heroin' (which earned Reed the title 'Drug Writer of the Year'), 'I'm Waiting For The Man', 'Black Angel's Death Song', 'White Light/White Heat' and the ultimate deviant-electronic extravaganza, 'Sister Ray'.

Maybe with that song the Underground reached their first peak. Cale thought so. It wasn't long after that he split along with Morrison, to be replaced by Doug Yule on the Velvets' third album.

Reed's songwriting by now was finding new levels. The power strumming of the early days gave way to a more gentle, sympathetic style typified by 'Pale Blue Eyes' and 'Candy'. Lou Reed had come of age. By the time the fourth Velvets' album, 'Loaded' hit the stands, a whole new audience was prepared to accept that the Warhol factory had spawned something concrete.

Reed himself never liked 'Loaded'. He thought the production of the album had ruined some of his finest songs, but despite his disapproval the album sold widely – and with songs like 'Sweet Jane',

Lou Reed sings on stage. Below: The Velvet Underground, with Lou Reed (far right), girl drummer Maureen Tucker, Sterling Morrison and Doug Yule.

'New Age', 'Sweet Nuthin'', 'Train Goin' Round The Bend' and 'Lonesome Cowboy Bill' has since become a collector's classic.

About the same time as the release of 'Loaded', Lou Reed decided that he had taken the Underground to the end of the line, and in the middle of a short residency at Max's Kansas City he picked up his guitar and walked out. Just like that.

Underground Collapse

It took several months for him to extricate himself from the legal and contractual mess, but August 23rd 1970 was the last Underground gig. The band carried on but it wasn't the same. Lou Reed was the Underground and New York knew it, nicknaming the remnants the Velvetens.

For Lou it was a time for wandering, resting, and finally working out his future. Warhol, Cale, Morrison and now the Underground itself had all passed on, leaving Reed finally to become himself. He never stopped writing, and by the time the business complications of his exit had died down he had enough material for his first solo album. So he signed with RCA, and used Richard Robinson as producer on the originally titled 'Lou Reed' album. Strangely, New York's number one son came to London to record it, using musicians like Steve Howe, Rick Wakeman, Caleb Quaye and Clem Cattini.

The album eventually appeared early in 1972 – when Bowie was beginning to steal the headlines with his own particular brand of decadence – and though it never became a top-seller, in many ways it was Reed's finest album.

To successfully write a song geared totally around the phrase 'I Love You' is a minor miracle. Reed did it as a throwaway. The album included the masterpiece 'Berlin', which Reed himself liked so much that he re-worked it as the title track for his third solo album which appeared in September 1973. As sophisticated a piece as any rock & roller could have attempted, it's a concise statement of Reed's relationship with the world:

*'In Berlin by the Wall
You were five feet ten inches tall
It was very nice
Candlelight and Dubonnet on ice'*

© Sunbury Music

The simple chord structures, the uncluttered, direct arrangements, and those lyrics. Words that retained simplicity but still operated on several levels. As Lou himself said, he thought of his albums as a series of chapters in a novel which when heard all together would 'make huge sense'.

With the solo album, he had moved away from his 'underground novel' and started on a new, improved version. 'Lou Reed' starts out with a hard rocker, 'I Can't Stand It', which those who read between the lines saw as a comment on the end of the Underground. The new improved, sophisticated Reed had also turned for the first time to production numbers like

'Ocean' and 'Berlin', while still finding room for 'Love Makes You Feel', harking back to the early days of punk rock. It's a classic album, but one that didn't satisfy Lou. The electricity was missing and he was soon back in the studio – again in London, but this time without Richard Robinson.

The superstar trip still held its attractions for Lou. He had met David Bowie during his first trip to the States, had listened to his music and decided that the young Englishman was doing a lot . . . and doing it right. For Bowie it was an experience too, for despite his occasional protestations, Reed appeared like the model on whom David had based Bowie. With this sort of connection the two of them *had* to work together, and the product of their combined labours, 'Transformer', proved how closely-knit the two were. Bowie and his guitarist Mick Ronson produced the set, which included 'Walk On The Wild Side' – a track which RCA decided to release as a single. It *had* to be a hit, and after six months as a 'sleeper' it finally made it to the British Top 10. The legend was finally out in the open.

Meanwhile, Lou had been busy on the stage with a tour of Britain, which brought constant rave reviews. Backing him were four young New Yorkers: Vinny Laporta and Eddie Reynolds (guitars), Bobby Resigno (bass) and Scottie Clark (drums), and together with Reed's superb rhythm guitar structures they produced some great live music.

New Sound

Typically, Reed, the perfectionist, wasn't satisfied, and during a later tour of Europe in summer 1973 he took with him an entirely different bunch of musicians and aimed for an organ-dominated sound. As always, Lou Reed moves on. Still slightly podgy, still wearing leathers and ghostly white make-up, and still looking for the next opening. On the album 'Berlin', for example, he chose Bob Ezrin, of Alice Cooper fame, as producer. Where to go from that is a question probably even Lou couldn't answer, except perhaps with a typically cryptic 'wherever'.

One thing's for sure. Long after the rock & roll culture is dead and gone, the words of Lou Reed will still have a relevance and a beauty of their own. That Lou Reed is a unique talent, few can disagree – the Velvet Underground has spawned a whole new culture. Bowie, in many ways close to Lou, is the one who managed to corner the commercial market, and has consequently taken most of the glory. The '70s have seen Bowie/Reed-style clothing, hair, attitudes and, if you like, plain bold, gay campery. Hence if Bowie and Reed have done one thing it is to show that there is a place for those who cannot be slotted. They have gone one better. Not only are their sounds powerful, but they have influenced as much as they have entertained. More important – their talent is enormous.

NASHVILLE

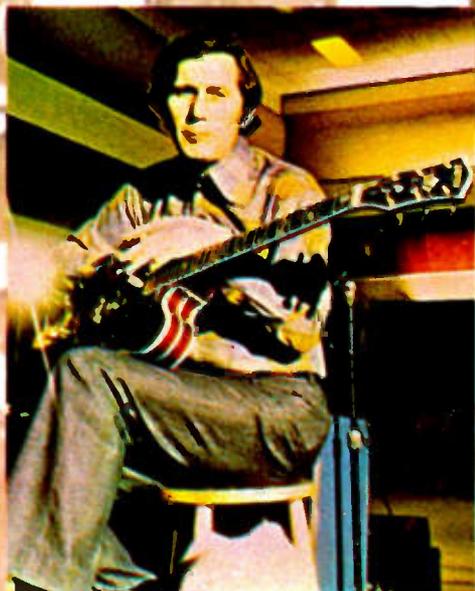
The country music capital of the world.

Nashville, Tennessee calls itself 'Music City, USA', and likes to think of itself as the music capital of the world. Its predominance in the field of country music is so great that, when Merle Haggard and Buck Owens put Bakersfield, California on the map as a rival recording centre, the town became known as the 'Nashville of the West'.

Nashville owes its pre-eminence to the 'Nashville sound', a distinctive electronic blend produced of two chief ingredients – a pool of first class musicians and a relaxed, easy atmosphere. Although the city has by this means become synonymous the world over with country music, Nashville's facilities and talents attract recording artists from all fields of music, and even symphony orchestras have contributed to the booming prosperity of its recording industry.

What originally put Nashville on the country map was the *Grand Ole Opry*, America's longest-running radio show which first went on the air on the Saturday night of November 8th, 1925. It wasn't the first hillbilly (as the music was then called) radio show – Radio WPAB in Fort Worth, Texas started the first regular broadcasts in January 1923 and stations in Atlanta and Chicago followed. The programmes were called barn dances, and included corn-cracking country comedians as well as the twangy guitar sounds and scrapey fiddling of the rural South and West.

Below: Guitarist Chet Atkins.



The Saturday night barn dance broadcast by Radio WSM Nashville achieved its immortality through the nickname it acquired one night during an ad-lib by the compère. He was a 36-year-old Chicago journalist named George Hay who called himself the 'Solemn Old Judge'. One night the programme followed an opera on the network and Hay cracked "now we will present grand ole opry."

Today, the *Grand Ole Opry* is the chief tourist attraction of Nashville, replacing the life-size replica of the Parthenon which was built in 1897 to substantiate Nashville's claim to be the 'Athens of the South'. On Friday and Saturday nights coach loads of country fans come from all over the States to attend the performances at the *Opry* and do their devotions at the other shrines of country music – which include the Country Music Hall of Fame and Johnny Cash's millionaire estate.

Many of the pilgrims come on tours organised by their local radio stations. The number of stations broadcasting country music full-time has increased from 80 to more than 800 in the past 10 years and the craze is spreading rapidly to the cities and the campuses. The last bastion of metropolitan sophistication fell this year when a New York City radio station went over to full-time country. Even the kids on the campuses, tiring of hard rock, are rediscovering the traditional pre-electronic forms of country music such as bluegrass. The industry is booming as country comes to town; record sales are topping \$350 millions and account for about 20% of total record sales in the US. It is big business in other countries too – in Britain and even in Japan.

Things have changed radically in Nashville itself as well. Jerry Bradley of RCA records can remember the days in the early '40s when a single rhythm section went from studio to studio – his father established the first studio on Music Row – 'Bradley's Barn'. Today there are some 2,000 musicians or 'pickers' in Nashville and some 40 recording studios. RCA alone publishes 72 country albums a year and an average of two-and-a-half singles a week. The session musicians can earn big money. The rates are fixed by their union: \$92 per four-hour recording session and double pay for the lead musician. The best of them play two or three sessions a day, sometimes four, and can earn from \$70,000 to \$100,000 a year. It is they who are the 'Nashville sound' when mixed through the multi-channel high-fidelity million dollar electronic recording equipment of the studios; they can turn indifferent music into a lucrative package

and a good song into a multi-million dollar hit.

For musicians on the way up or the way down, the ancillary industries which have sprung up around Music Row provide a living. Nashville is a centre for recording advertising jingles at \$30 a session for local station commercials, more for national ones. Aspiring 'pickers' usually have to start in 'demo sessions' which are rough recordings of new songs for playing hopefully to the publishers and big record companies. There are an estimated 1,400 songwriters and 600 music publishers in Nashville today all trying to cash in on the country boom.

"The thing that really made Nashville", Jerry Bradley says, "was its raw material; the influx of songwriters and pickers. The Nashville Sound isn't one kind of speaker or mike; it's the combination of highly professional mixers and musicians who produce a particular rhythm sound."

However as the sweet violins and heavenly choirs are superimposed on the performances of the singers and the pickers, and as elaborately produced studio arrangements increasingly replace the 'head sessions' (improvisations on the studio floor) country music is becoming more and more pop. They call it 'modern country' or 'metropolitan country'. It is the dilution, many say the pollution, of the simple music to suit more sophisticated tastes which are making country into something else. Yet at the same time rock musicians are turning to country and trying to carry its messages to the more musically-demanding younger audiences.

What have so far largely survived the temptations of the mass market are the themes of the songs which form a single tradition extending back beyond the first commercial hillbilly into the oral archives of folk music. Songs which were sung in the Spanish-American war have been revamped for the war in Vietnam to tell the same story – the personal experience of the country boy called to war; political songs of the 19th Century have been rewritten around the Watergate to make the same point – the contrast between the hypocrisy and corruption of 'them' in Washington and the simple virtues of 'us' back home.

In Nashville they think that one reason for the country boom may be that young people are ready to listen to words again, seldom audible in rock music. William Ivey, director of the Country Music Foundation in Nashville:

"Country songs are non-preaching but invariably they tell a story. They've often been sexy although there aren't any dirty words in country music. Adultery has always been a familiar theme, so has pregnancy leading sometimes to murder. The most frequent theme of the last decade has been the country boy in the big city, the culturally displaced person. What city people often don't realise is that it is possible to be poor and happy and to have a poor community in which the social system functions. It's wrong to take a socialist-realist view of country music."

Mike Wingfield, a Nashville disc jockey:

"The story has to be obvious so that the listener doesn't need much imagination. The story is usually about a real life experience that can happen to a lot of people. The message is about life as it relates to ordinary people. Sadness is what created country music and sadness is often about a love affair. There's very little rags to riches; more often the country boy doesn't make good. People relate more easily to failure than they do to success."

For all the commercialism which has come in and the show biz extravagance in Nashville today, they remember what Hank Williams once said:

"It can be explained in just one word; sincerity. When a hillbilly sings a crazy song, he feels crazy. When he sings 'I laid my mother away' he sees her a-laying there in a coffin. He sings more sincere than most entertainers because the hillbilly was raised rougher than most entertainers. The people who has been raised something the way the hillbilly has, know what he is singing about and appreciates it."

The country stars of today, a good few of them millionaires, were often raised rough themselves. Johnny Cash and Glenn Campbell rose from abject poverty in Arkansas. Prison is not compulsory although it is an important part of the mystique of Cash and Haggard. Haggard's pardon signed by Governor Ronald Reagan releasing him from San Quentin is one of the exhibits at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, along with Johnny Cash's size 10½ boots. Prison helped the fast up and coming artist Johnny Rodriguez. He was in a Texas jail for rustling goats. He took his guitar along and the jailer heard him singing. Singer and song-writer Tom T. Hall happened to be in town and the talent-spotting jailer called him down to hear the singing prisoner. Rodriguez was 'discovered'.

Johnny Cash, who by marrying into the Carter family has become a member of a country aristocracy extending back to the earliest days of recording, has not outgrown his size 10½ boots. He can still be seen shopping in a Nashville supermarket. The country stars drive their expensive limousines and languish by their swimming people but they don't forget Hank Williams's one word. Sincerity is the butter on their bread.

A pop star can come today and be gone tomorrow but a handful of hit records can keep a country artist in business on the road for 20 or 30 years. Chet Atkins has been at it since the '40s; Roy Acuff hasn't had a record hit for years but his fans have not forgotten him. The country stars don't emigrate to Manhattan or Beverly Hills — they walk the streets of Nashville unmolested and in dance halls and tents they sign autographs without complaint and treat their fans as old friends.

There is less gap between the bottom and the top than in other branches of show biz and, in Nashville, hope persists

longer among the pickers and the singers and the writers (you need to be all three these days) who bring their talents to town. For 'Music City USA' is not just the million dollar studios and the millionaire stars but also the unknowns who sing at every other bar in town and hang around Tootsie's Orchid Lounge behind the Opry to rub shoulders with the stars who come in there for a beer.

Fame can come in middle age to country artists. In Nashville they talk about 'paying your dues' which means serving your apprenticeship in the small clubs, the country towns and in the 'demo sessions'. One in a hundred may make a living and one in a thousand earn a plaque in the Hall of Fame but if its failure — that's country too. And there is always a song to

be written about it, like the one by Mac Davis which goes:

*'It's two am in Nashville, midnight in LA
You're sleepin', I'm out on the road
I know that you can't hear me but I'm
talking anyway
Well the man here didn't like my songs
and sent me on my way
And I blew my bus fare all in Tootsie's bar
I'm out on Murphy's Borough Road,
hitch-hiking to LA
And the rain is pourin' down on my guitar.'*

1974 sees plans to move the Grand Ole Opry to a site outside of Nashville called — Opryland! The mind boggles at the plasticity of it, but hopefully, as in the past, country music will be able to stand it.

The Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Below: Johnny Cash with his wife June.



Bryan Chalker

NEXT WEEK: Classics in Rock.

ROCK: '60s-'70s

Clever Rock

The modern music that doesn't get into the top regions of the charts

Though its roots lie far back indeed, modern progressive rock has, by the early '70s, achieved the status of being truly *the* modern music. Though pop music is also clearly here to stay, its direction is far more fickle and its lines of development more diffuse. 'Clever' rock has in fact become as great a money-spinner as the Osmonds or David Cassidy, but examples of it are only rarely to be seen in the Top 10.

One of the top groups, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, have now sold, worldwide, nearly three-quarters as many albums as the Beatles, and seem to be *the* most popular act ever to appear in places like Japan and Germany. At its very best, 'clever' rock is apparently a contradiction: both futuristic but also timeless; and at its worst, it is boring and pointless. However, it is rarely facile or badly played, since most musicians who fall into this loose and generalised category are those who would most probably have been playing in orchestras had they been born 100 years ago.

The most rapidly rising of the British progressive groups is Yes, who were voted 1973's top band in readers' polls. The material side of their success is as great as any pop idol's, and they have set a rare precedent in being the first group ever to play five consecutive nights at London's

Rainbow theatre. Five nights, incidentally, that sold out in record-breaking time without being advertised. At these concerts Yes featured the four movements (four sides) of their double-album, 'Tales From A Topographic Ocean', a monumental work explained by lead singer Jon Anderson as being: "Our attempt to recapture 5,000,000 years of human existence and knowledge, and to chronicle the rise and fall of the many beautiful civilisations that the earth has known. The final movement is about the ritual of life and is entitled 'Nous Sommes Du Soleil' ('We Are Of The Sun'), and it shows that the Sun is the major force-giver and cause of life."

Pretentious Sound

A pretty weighty subject for sure, and light years away from 'Shu bedu, shu bedu, I'm mad about you'. No doubt that, to some ears, the expansive and grandiose themes that groups like Yes struggle to communicate may sound pretentious, but anyone who has seen them perform or has listened intently to their records will realise that their attitude is anything but flippant and is totally genuine. In terms of the sheer complexity and demanding nature of their music, they set themselves a task impossible to anyone with his tongue in his cheek. There's no room in this type of music for a footballer or actor out to cash in on his fame and turn out a couple of Gold Discs.

But progressive rock shouldn't feel

tempted to denigrate pop music, because, after all, one of its greatest struggles has been to be accepted by the denizens of 'serious music'. The attitude of critics of classical music was for many years the same towards progressive rock as some fans of Yes may feel towards Gary Glitter. Many of 'clever' rock's greatest musicians came originally from the pop field, and a quick check on pedigrees shows an amazing diversity of background. The classical influences on several progressive rock groups are obvious and undeniable, and a measure of their acceptance are such accolades as reviews in *The Times* and concerts using famous orchestras as an adjunct.

Focus, too, are unashamedly 'classical' in direction, and were the first continental group to be adopted in a big way by the British and American public. They are also one of the few progressive rock bands to



have had not one, but two, singles in the charts. 'Sylvia' was a beautiful classical theme played on the expert guitar of Jan Akkerman, a haunting blend of the Les Paul tone associated with Eric Clapton and the musical construction of a great classical composer. Focus are also one of the few groups to have had two hit albums at the same time. Despite all this 'pop' success, several of the group's members have in fact studied at Amsterdam's renowned Conservatoire of Music, and founder-members Jan Akkerman, Thijs Van Leer and Cyril Havermans have even had successful solo albums released featuring 'pure' classical music.

'Sonic Sophistication'

Though 'serious' music has had a profound influence on the development of progressive rock, its affinities are more related to the growth of minority types, and its influences are a diverse blend of jazz, R&B, rock & roll, and, more importantly, the 'underground' drug/rock scene. With the enormous increase in 'sonic sophistication' during the late '60s and '70s, the boundaries of progressive music have become vast and hazy. The connection between Miles Davies and groups like Genesis is anything but apparent, though they do have something in common - all groups and artists in the category being concerned with experimentation and the development of rock music.

Redferns

The 'underground' is traceable right back to the 18th Century, when classical music as we know it first struggled to the surface, but the major period of impetus for progressive music was during the immediate 'post-acid' scene of the late '60s. The psychedelic era of the mid-'60s had acquainted the public with the delights of nearly symphonic-length music and the growth, on both sides of the Atlantic, of semi-mystic bands had made experimental and 'new' music both financially rewarding and highly desirable. Acid rock had opened the way for music that was as sophisticated and imaginative as the minds of its proponents could devise, and though Jimi Hendrix first appeared on the scene in '67, it was his success that first flattened the opposition.

Hendrix was the product of a then unique synthesis of many varied and traditional forms. He had played with soul star Little Richard, and played a blues-guitar as excellently as B.B. King, but with the drive and edge of Albert King. What Hendrix pioneered was the use of feedback and amplifier distortion in order to add a new dimension to his music. He was possibly the first artist to really popularise electronic effects as an integral part of his sound, and the effect he had on the scene was stunning. Very few guitarists on records today can claim that their sound is not based on what Hendrix devised, both in terms of technique and presentation. Hendrix was also largely responsible for the

growth in the range of the subject matter of songs. Instead of lyrics associated solely with the joys or misery of romantic love, he, together with several other bands at the time, brought to the public notice complex word-pictures and concepts that spanned vast areas of history and religion - with a musical range, matched only (in a more 'popish' fashion) by the Beatles on 'Sgt. Pepper' and subsequent albums.

Ultra-Pop And Ultra-Jazz

'Clever' rock is not so much a unified field of music, but more a stage of sophistication that has been reached almost simultaneously by artists in nearly every sphere of modern music since the days of the Nice and Hendrix. It can be roughly divided into slightly smaller lots by classifying groups according to the most outstanding aspects of their work. So it is possible to say that there are 'electronic' groups, 'classical' rock bands, 'mystic' bands, and 'rhythmic' groups. There are also another two categories that may be called 'Ultra-pop' and 'Ultra-jazz'. To try and squeeze some of the most diverse bands in the world into these categories may seem, at best, frivolous, but at the same time it might make it easier to understand their development.

Into the first category can be put bands like Soft Machine and the various synthesiser-based bands; into the second, groups like Focus, Continuum, Yes, and Emerson.

Opposite page: Keith Emerson, the keyboard player with ELP. John McLaughlin of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Below: Lead singer Jon Anderson and bass player Chris Squire from Yes.



Roger Morton



Soft Machine, one of the main electronic groups, are known for their complex time signatures.

Lake & Palmer. 'Mystic' encompasses bands like the Mahavishnu Orchestra and the Pink Floyd, as well as various esoteric groups; and 'rhythmic' covers such bands as Santana, Led Zeppelin and Chicago. The other two categories really relate to those bands whose sophistication is more directly an extension of specific areas of music: 'ultra-pop' (not a denigration) could include groups like Traffic, Genesis, and the Beatles' later work; and 'ultra-jazz', people like Miles Davis, Eddie Harris, and Roland Kirk.

With the advent of 'drug rock' in the mid-'60s occurred another phenomenon closely related to the development of rock, that of the massive outdoor rock concert. Jimi Hendrix made it at the first of these concerts, at Monterey in 1967, and concerts went on to become a sounding-board for many progressive groups that might otherwise have stayed in obscurity. The massive attendance at these concerts, as a side-effect, made it possible for groups to purchase and use the vast array of equipment needed to emulate the sounds that they created on record. Hence groups began to use 10-20 tons of gear, 16-32-channel mixing desks, 4 or 5 different keyboard instruments, a multitude of drums, and amplification capable of 2 or 3,000 watts output. The scale of these effects afterwards became so difficult for musicians to re-create during 'live' appearances that the Pink Floyd, for example, took to sitting out of sight of the audience while slide-projectors flashed psychedelic images onto a screen.

Concept Album

Of importance in the rise of 'clever' rock has been the introduction of the 'concept' album, an innovation that brought rock much closer to classical music in that a group could record a symphonic length piece of music, divided up, as classical music is, into contrasting sections. There will be many arguments as to 'who did it first', so suffice it to say that the idea came about in the late '60s/early '70s, and that the 'themes' of these 'concept' albums



are as diverse as the groups playing them.

How the effects that appear on record are created is in itself as vast and complex a field as the actual music. Some people believe that music is closely related to the 'natural' sounds of the environment - hence the gentle clockwork style of the early classical period giving way to the clashing complex machinery of Stravinsky and Shostakovich, in turn to be superseded by the electronic effects of the synthesiser - early versions of which were built by the BBC Radiophonics workshop in London in order to copy the sound of modern computers.

Undoubtedly one of the most major developments in effects was the building of the 'synthesiser' by Moog in the late '60s. The synthesiser is a vast electronic instrument capable of creating any pitch, tonality, and combination of sound imaginable. By the use of memory banks, the individual 'creations' can be stored and interwoven with each other. Utilising the discovery of both stereo and quadraphonic sound placement it then becomes possible to not only create completely new sounds, but to make music aurally three-dimensional. Part of the complexity of the mixing of progressive records lies in the construction of a 'sound picture' that places the members of a group in an imaginary area in front of or behind the listener. Hence, unlike the old days when a level for each instrument was found and pre-set for recording, each of the 32-tracks used may have to be continuously altered throughout the piece.

Modern technology is being stretched to

the utmost to keep pace with the demands of progressive groups. At a Yes concert in November, 1973, at the Rainbow in London, the group used laser beams, lights wired in to the sound systems, massive futuristic-shaped scenery that moved and changed under remote control, and a stunning multitude of special musical effects controlled from a 15-foot-long mixing desk with a maze of controls. Eddie Offord, their engineer, ran up and down the desk like a man possessed, and their stage manager, Mike Tait, sat behind another console wearing headphones with built-in microphone so that he could direct the lighting and stage effects. On tour, Yes use four removal vans to carry their enormous amount of equipment, and have a total complement of 45 people in their entourage - not including wives, girlfriends, or freeloaders.

Superstar Crooner

'Clever' rock is responsible for the growing rift between the 'charts' and what is truly 'popular', and may perhaps be indirectly responsible for the re-emergence of the superstar crooner and the glamour-rock performer. 'Clever' rock is quite possibly the direction of music in the future and, providing it doesn't lose itself and its audiences in its complexity and diffusion, gives both itself and its admirers the status of being 'modern classical music' followers . . . and the respectability of being in a direct line of succession from serious music that dates back to prehistoric times.

NEXT WEEK IN ROCK: Rock revival.

POP FILE

... the Who's Who of Pop. Week by week the A-Z of who did what and when.

LOU RAWLS was born in Chicago and started out singing blues and gospel before moving on to jazz-influenced soul music. He moved to the West Coast in 1958 where he became friendly with Sam Cooke, for whom he recorded a tribute album 'Bring It On Home' in 1971. His other albums include 'Tobacco Road', 'That's Lou', 'Feelin' Good', 'You Made Me So Very Happy', 'Natural Man' and 'Silk And Soul'.

JIMMY REED was born in Mississippi in 1925, and moved to Chicago when he was 18. He began recording in 1953 for Vee Jay, and his songs include 'Big Boss Man', 'Bright Lights Big City' and 'Shame Shame Shame'. He was one of the first blues



names to hit British R&B circles in the early '60s, and he was a major influence on the Animals and Rolling Stones. Then, as other Chicago blues names became familiar, Reed's less intense and often repetitive style lost popularity.

JIM REEVES was a singer of soft 'n' easy commercially-oriented country music who was killed in a plane crash in 1964. Since his death he has become more popular than in his lifetime. 'Gentleman Jim,' as his fans call him, has had many hits including 'He'll Have To Go' (1960), 'Welcome To My World' (1963), 'I Love You Because' (1964), 'There's A Heartache Following Me' (1964) – Meher Baba's favourite song according to Pete Townshend – 'Distant Drums' (1966), and 'When Two Worlds Collide' (1969).

TERRY REID left Peter and the Jaywalkers to form his own band in 1968. He built up a good reputation in the clubs with a powerful act that included his versions of 'Summertime Blues' and 'Bang Bang' and, with his cheeky smile and bright white sweater, he seemed set for stardom. Although he has earned himself a good reputation in Britain, his real success has been in the States, where his rough and rocking bluesy albums 'Bang Bang You're Terry Reid' and 'Terry Reid' (produced by Mickie Most) were big sellers. In 1973 he released a new album, 'River', of pleasant quiet numbers, and proved himself capable of treading the rock-jazz fusion tight-rope extremely successfully.

PAUL REVERE AND THE RAIDERS were a big name among American teeny-boppers in the mid-'60s. They were formed in Oregon in 1962 by vocalist-saxophonist Mark Lindsay – the heart-throb of the group – and organist Paul Revere. After appearing on the *Dick Clark Show* on TV in 1965 they recorded a series of best-selling albums including 'Here They Come', 'In The Beginning', 'Midnight Ride', 'Spirit of '67', 'Revolution', and 'Something Happening'.

THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS Bobby Hatfield and Bill Medley – purveyed what was dubbed 'blue-eyed soul' – soft, spacey but definitely souly music. After some chart success in 1962 with 'Little Latin Lupe Lu', they appeared on the Beatles' US tour of 1964. This gave them the exposure they needed for their best-known recording that has since become one of the all-time pop classics, 'You've Lost That Loving Feeling'. Written by Cynthia Weill, Barry Mann and Phil Spector, and produced by Phil Spector, the record reached no. 1 in 1965 and was followed by 'Unchained Melody' and 'Soul And Inspiration'. The Brothers continued to record regularly but with less success until they split in 1968. Hatfield later attempted to recreate their unique vocal sound with Bill Walker, but neither the revived group nor the solo efforts of either 'brother' has repeated the success.

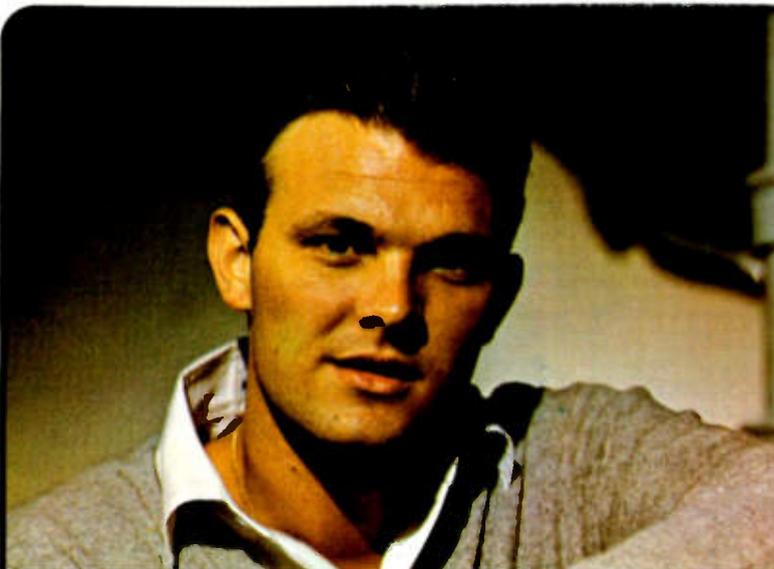
MARTY ROBBINS started a brief vogue for cowboy saga songs in the early '60s with his hits 'El Paso' and 'Devil Woman'. He remains a very popular singer in C&W circles.

SMOKEY ROBINSON AND THE MIRACLES started out at their Detroit high school in 1955 with a line-up of Smokey Robinson (lead vocals), Claudette Robinson, Ronnie White, Pete Moore, Bobby Rogers and Mary Tarplin. The group was known just as the Miracles until the late '60s. They recorded for Chess, were produced by Berry Gordy, and signed by him when he started Tamla Motown in 1959. They were among the first Motown groups to make it, coming up with 'Shop Around' in 1963, the first of many US hits including 'I Like It Like That', 'You've Really Got A Hold On Me', 'Mickey's Monkey' and 'Tracks Of My Tears' (the last taking them belatedly into the UK charts in 1969). The group was a major influence on the early Beatles. In 1972 Smokey Robinson left the group to work solo, but still produces their recordings.

THE ROCKIN' BERRIES came from Manchester and had some success in the days of Merseymania. 'He's In Town' (1964) and 'Poor Man's Son' (1965) were fine records, and the



group deserved longer-lasting popularity than they enjoyed. They are still alive and well, playing the working men's clubs, and apparently enjoying it.



TOMMY ROE was one of the most successful of the Buddy Holly imitators to arrive on the scene after Holly's death. His 'Sheila' (1962) was a musical and vocal copy of Holly, and he followed it with the less Holly-ish 'The Folk Singer' and 'Everybody' (1963), before lapsing into obscurity, apparently forgotten. In 1969 he made no. 1 in the UK with the pleasing soft-rocker 'Dizzy'.

THE RONNETTES (Veronica Bennett – now known as Ronnie Spector, Estelle Bennett and Nedra Talley) started out in 1959 singing at the Peppermint Lounge in New York where the Twist craze started. In 1963 they signed with Phil Spector, who produced their first record, 'Be My Baby', which sold a million. They followed this in 1964 with 'Baby I Love You' but never repeated their hit success, although they made two albums and contributed some characteristic stuff to 'Phil Spector's Christmas Album'. Leon Russell was among the session-men on 'Be My Baby'. Veronica married Phil Spector and has a single on Apple.

TIM ROSE was one of a number of American singer/songwriters who came to notice in the late '60s. His particular contributions were the song 'Morning Dew', the arrangement of 'Hey Joe' that Jimi Hendrix was to adapt for his first release with the Experience, and the credit for being one of the first to develop the idea of folk-rock. He released two albums, 'Tim Rose' and 'Through Rose-Coloured Glasses', before retiring.

ROXY MUSIC were formed in 1971 by ex-Newcastle Art School student Bryan Ferry. Their appearance at the Lincoln Festival in 1972 brought them instant fame for their brand of rock that owes little to the '50s despite a consciously 'glitter' image. Their album 'Roxy Music' on Island was followed by one hit single, 'Virginia Plain', but they then lost Eno, their electronics and synthesiser player who left to go solo. Bryan Ferry also works solo, and made the charts in 1973 with his revival of Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall', although he still sings with the group. The current line-up is Bryan Ferry (vocals, piano), Andy Mackay (brass and piano), Phil Manzanera (guitar), Eddie Jobson (violin, and keyboards), Johnny Gustavson (bass) and Paul Thompson (drums). Previous members include Eno, Graham Simpson, Roger Bunn, Dave O'List, Rik Kenton and John Porter.

DAVID RUFFIN was born in Mississippi, the son of a Baptist preacher. He was a race horse jockey before signing to Berry Gordy's Anna label as a solo singer. When one of the Temptations left the group Ruffin joined and sang on hits including 'Ain't Too Proud To Beg' and 'I Know I'm Losing You'. In 1968 he left the group to follow a solo career again, and recorded four albums: 'My Whole World Ended', 'Feelin' Good', 'I Am My Brother's Keeper' (with brother Jimmy), and 'David Ruffin'.

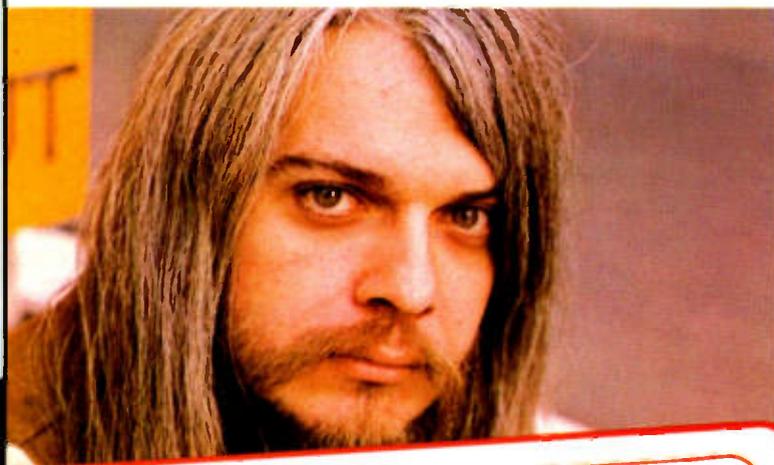


JIMMY RUFFIN, brother of David, recorded as a solo artist for Tamla Motown. His best-known recordings are 'What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted' and 'Gonna Give Her All The Love I've Got', and the album he recorded with David Ruffin.

TODD RUNDGREN was singer and songwriter for Nazz before producing records by the Band, Jesse Winchester, Badfinger, Paul Butterfield, Fanny, Grand Funk Railroad and the New York Dolls. In 1970 he made his first solo album, 'Rum', and continues to record solo and with a group he has formed.

OTIS RUSH was born in Mississippi in 1935 and came to Chicago in 1956. He began playing the clubs, under the spell of B. B. King like so many other black guitarists. He is also an excellent vocalist (listen to 'So Many Roads') but has never achieved the popularity of his friend Buddy Guy.

LEON RUSSELL was brought up in Tulsa and studied classical music from an early age. At the age of 14 he formed his own band (playing trumpet) and played the local clubs before doing a tour with Jerry Lee Lewis. He learned to play the guitar in California and worked on sessions with Glen Campbell, Phil Spector, Herb Alpert and the Byrds among others. After a spell out of music he joined Delaney and Bonnie's Friends as pianist/guitarist, and wrote 'Delta Lady' for Joe Cocker. He formed his own record company Shelter and recorded his own album in 1970, produced Joe Cocker's second album, and put together the 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen' album featuring himself and Joe Cocker. Since 1971 he has toured with his own group, recorded five more albums, played at George Harrison's Bangla Desh concert and produced Bob Dylan's 'Watching The River Flow'.



POP FILE



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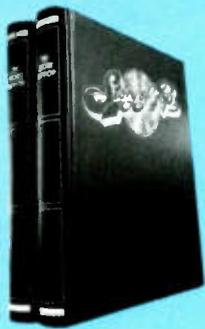
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In the next issue



POP INFLUENCES

Rock And The Classics: Rock bands revitalising classical music is a hard pill for the purists to swallow, but the fact remains, that Procol Harum's 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' is Bach's 'Air On A G-String'.

BLACK MUSIC

The New Black Writers: They are more than just writers – they handle the lead vocals, the instrumentation, the rhythm arrangements and the vocal back-ups. Most notable of the new breed are Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye and Bill Withers.

ROCK

Rock & Roll Revival: There's Roxy Music, Gary Glitter, David Bowie, Roy Wood and Marc Bolan. Are they just mimicking or are they breaking new ground?

POP

Clockwork Pop: It's a world of image-publicity, merchandising, media exposure and entrepreneurs, who include men like Don Kirschner, Mickie Most and Jonathan King.

POP CULTURE

Youth In Revolt: Youth wanted to revolt against society's way of living – rock, with its protest songs, helped them to keep their ideals intact and do something. Most notable struggles in Japan, Paris and Chicago where they really lived out Jagger's 'Street Fighting Man'.

SUPERSTARS

The Everly Brothers: They had been performing in public since they were six, and so they were country singers before they were rock & roll stars. They fused country music and rock & roll and made quality harmony that has been most difficult to improve upon.

PROFILE

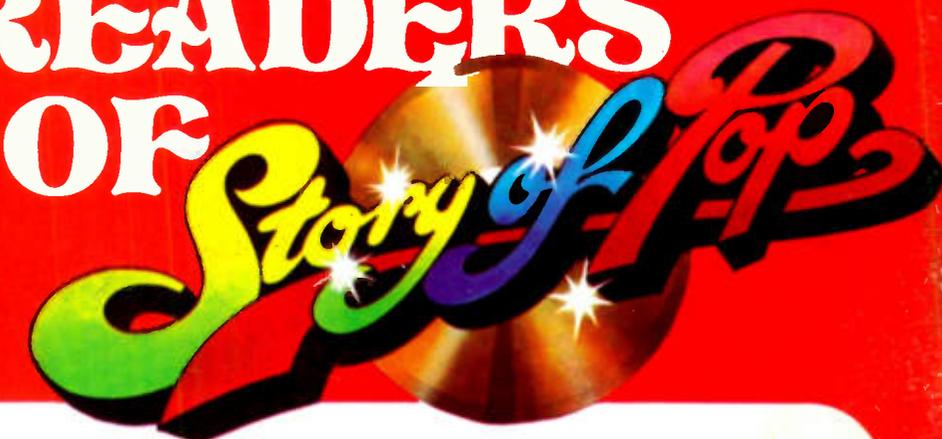
Eddie Cochran: The story of an all-American boy who scored a Gold Disc with his hit 'Summertime Blues', unhappily going on to gain instant immortality after his death in a car crash.

THE MUSIC

Singer/Songwriters: They were a very impressive list of people, from Dylan to Van Morrison to Leonard Cohen. They were the artists who gave status to the rock world by writing thoughtful/meaningful lyrics.

Plus: Pop File and more Lyrics

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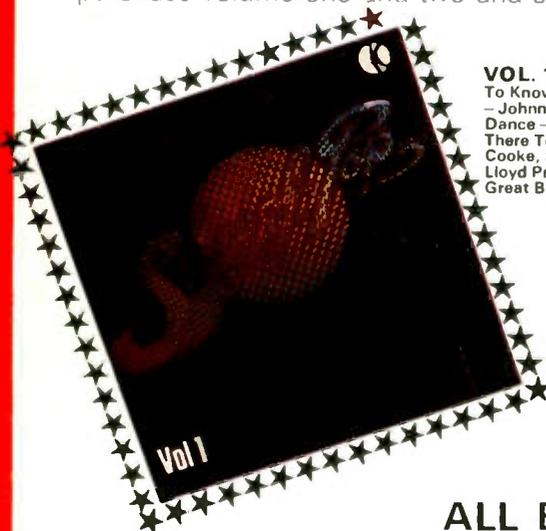
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expert wing of their manager, the band managed to combine one of the most energetic and successful tour careers with the regular output of one album a year. They played to sell-out venues all over the world and appeared every year at the top of the various pop polls. But the public and press were not always on their side. Their second album, 'Led Zeppelin II', released in August 1970, continued to develop the directness and power of the first, and numbers like 'Whole Lotta Love' and 'The Lemon Song' have since become classics of heavy rock. Their third album, 'Led Zeppelin III', was released only a few months later and contained, in contrast, a number of laid-back songs and several traditional folk songs written at the group's Welsh hide-out. This album, though, was well and truly hammered by the press, and for a time the group became very despondent about the whole thing.

A year later, with a couple of highly successful tours under their belts, the group braced themselves to make another LP. This time they wanted to prove that they could still be successful on record as well as on live gigs. They decided to completely play-down the group, and the LP appeared without even the printers' name on the cover. Instead of a title, the group set a precedent by using four runic symbols, each representing the personality of a member of the band. The album was released in November 1971 and, contrary to the beliefs of many who thought they were committing professional suicide, the LP was a hit and even the pop press had to admit that numbers like 'Stairway To Heaven' were indeed musically unsurpassable, and that the band had succeeded in living up to its reputation.

It was this uneasy relationship with the press – based on the apparently arrogant refusal of the band to co-operate – and some justified comments concerning the band's originality and cynicism, that led to much of their great success as a live band being ignored. During their mammoth tour of the States in 1972, the Rolling Stones had also arrived there and, as Page says: "Who wanted to know that Zeppelin had broken the all-time attendance record at such-and-such a place when they could get shots of Mick Jagger talking to Truman Capote?" As a result, Zeppelin lost out in the publicity stakes, and their tour work was largely overlooked.

In May, 1973, their album, 'Houses Of the Holy', was released . . . and the controversy started all over again. The critics were sharply divided between those who liked Zeppelin and liked the album, those who didn't like Zeppelin and didn't like the album, those who liked Zeppelin but didn't like the album, and the vast majority who weren't sure about the album but appreciated that Zeppelin were a great group that they'd followed for years. True, the album was certainly different from much of their previous work (it even featured string arrangements in places), and the melody side took precedence over the rhythm patterns on several tracks, but

Chris Walter

Robert Fialla



Centre: Jeffrey Mayer

Roger Murrain



their hard rock ability still showed through.

Of much greater importance to the band and the hundreds of thousands that have seen them perform, is that the apparent loss in momentum as far as recording is concerned is contradicted by the increase in their vitality at live concerts. Quite apart from box-office successes (they broke the world attendance figure for a single group when 58,000 people paid to watch them play at La Tampa in Florida), they seem to have reached an even greater degree of 'togetherness' on stage. The switching of John Paul Jones to playing more keyboards has added another dimension to their music and, as always, they still burn off fantastic amounts of energy at each performance.

Though their recording future may still be in some doubt their next album should resolve the issue, and either way there's little doubt that they will remain one of the most exciting live bands in the world.



Chris Walter

BACK TRACK

Jimmy Page joined Neil Christian's Crusaders on leaving school, but later went to art college. 'Spotted' playing at London's Marquee club and became a top session guitarist in the early '60s. By 1965 he was producing for the Immediate Label. In 1966 he joined the Yardbirds as bass player but switched to twin lead guitar with Jeff Beck for the Rolling Stones/Yardbirds tour of the States that year.

1968: The Yardbirds split up and Chris Dreja and Jimmy Page decide to form the New Yardbirds. Singer Terry Reid suggests Robert Plant as vocalist and Plant brings in John Bonham on drums, whom he'd met in the Band Of Joy. Dreja then decided to become a photographer and session musician John Paul Jones joined on bass.

After a tour of Scandinavia, the group dropped the name New Yardbirds and at Keith Moon's suggestion they became Led Zeppelin. First concert in London brought a standing ovation and immensely favourable press coverage.

1969, March: Led Zeppelin I album.

1970, August: Led Zeppelin II album.

1970, October: Led Zeppelin III album.

1971, November: UNTITLED (Led Zeppelin IV album).

Led Zeppelin's massive tour of the States in 1972 was overshadowed in the press by the return to the road of the Rolling Stones.

1973, May: Houses Of The Holy album.

The Supergroups

Only by consulting the yellowing backnumbers of the music papers could anyone who was interested enough ascertain which band's formation it was that first stimulated some enterprising journalist to coin the term 'supergroup'. Blind Faith? ELP? Judas Jump? It really doesn't matter. The generally accepted meaning of the word is 'a group of musicians containing one or more members previously well-known from other bands'.

The fact that very few of the so-called 'supergroups' have managed to produce any worthwhile music, and even fewer have been able to stay together for any considerable length of time, may slightly compromise the habitual over-use of the term that was prevalent around the late '60s and early '70s.

Though nobody was throwing the word around in 1966 when Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker first got together for a blow in Baker's front room, Cream were probably the prototype supergroup. When that band finally fell apart, in 1969, Clapton and Baker reappeared almost immediately in the company of Stevie Winwood (who had been distinguishing himself for four or five years with Traffic and the Spencer Davis Group) and Rick Grech (ex-Family) as half of a new group, Blind Faith. How easy, therefore, it was to cry 'supergroup' and sit back waiting for miracles.

Pipe Dreams

The trouble with Blind Faith was that they made an excellent if unspectacular album and then collapsed within months due to personal problems. It was disappointing that the group's life was so short, but what was almost universally ignored was that Titanic Talent A and Titanic Talent B may not have enough in common to produce music of commensurate worth to their status and abilities. Thus music writers fantasised about their ideal supergroups, and allowed their minds to dwell on what would happen if Paul McCartney formed a band with Alvin Lee, or if Mitch Mitchell ganged up with Keith Emerson, and so on *ad infinitum*, completely forgetting that musicians have to be compatible with each other to play together. And therein lies the rub.

The groups who founded second-generation British rock (which chronologically started with the Beatles) were generally aggregations of friends who got their kicks playing together locally. The best of them got rich and famous, like the Stones, the Who, the Yardbirds, the Animals, the Kinks, *etcetera*. As time went on, though, some of the musicians involved found that the reasons that had brought them into their original groups were no longer valid. Maybe there were personality differences, maybe they were no longer getting any musical satisfaction. Therefore, they moved on, in search of more congenial surroundings — musical environments in which they could be more creative. In some cases, they packed their bags and fled in order to found a group in which they could assert themselves as leaders without competition from their fellows. Others left to collaborate with musicians closer to their own weight. The paths of many musicians crossed, joined and parted, sometimes all in the space of a few months; and the following attempts to trace some of them.

In 1968, John Mayall made an album entitled 'Bare Wires', which featured a line-up of musicians including former Graham Bond Organisation members Jon Hiseman (drums) and Dick Heckstall-Smith (saxophones), guitarist Mick Taylor, bassist Tony Reeves, ex-Manfred Mann trumpeter and violinist Henry Lowther, and himself. Hiseman, Heckstall-Smith and Reeves went on to form Colosseum with guitarist James Litherland and keyboard player Dave Greenslade. Later on, Litherland was replaced by ex-Bakerloo guitarist Dave Clempson, Reeves by bassist Mark Clarke, and to top it all off, British R&B veteran Chris Farlowe joined up as lead vocalist. Supergroup?

Meanwhile, the Crazy World Of Arthur Brown was fragmenting during a traumatic American tour, and on returning to Britain, organist Vincent Crane and drummer Carl Palmer formed a new group — to be known as Atomic Rooster. The Rooster went through many changes before Chris Farlowe joined as vocalist, but one of its most important changes was when Carl Palmer left.

One of the major new groups of 1967 was the Nice. Originally backing group to singer P. P. Arnold, its members (Keith Emerson, keyboards; Lee Jackson, bass; Blinky Davison, drums and David O'List, guitar) struck out on their own. By late 1968, O'List had left, and by 1970 it had

become apparent that Jackson and Davison just couldn't keep up with Emerson. Emerson then teamed up with Greg Lake, who'd played bass in King Crimson and . . . Carl Palmer.

To backtrack once more. In 1969, leader, guitarist and principal composer of the Small Faces — Steve Marriott — decided that he wanted to play a heavier and more R&B-orientated music than his long-time colleagues Ronnie Lane (bass), Ian McLagan (keyboard) and Kenny Jones (drums). So off he went to form Humble Pie with guitarist/vocalist Peter Frampton, whose talent had largely gone unnoticed in his previous band, the Herd. Frampton eventually departed to be himself replaced by . . . Dave Clempson!

The Faces Were Born

Meanwhile, Rod Stewart, who'd been the singer with the Jeff Beck Group, Steampacket, and numerous other people before, and guitarist Ronnie Wood, who'd been the bass player in the Beck band alongside Stewart, left that band to join the remainder of the Small Faces. Thus was born the Faces, modified in 1973 by the replacement of Lane by Tetsu Yamauchi, a Japanese bass player who'd replaced ex-Mayall bassist Andy Fraser in a group that he'd founded called Free.

To reiterate the question, then, what is a supergroup? It could quite logically be stated that the Who is a supergroup, or that the Rolling Stones is a supergroup, or that Led Zeppelin is a supergroup — simply because they have proved to be consistently brilliant. On the other hand is, for example, West, Bruce and Laing a supergroup simply because its members have distinguished themselves elsewhere? Were Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young a supergroup — indeed, were they a group at all, or simply a collection of soloists hanging out together? After all, there was only one Crosby, Stills and Nash album and one Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young album of original material produced before they all went their separate ways once more.

Apart from the musical aspect and the ego aspect, another quite convincing reason for forming a supergroup is the increased money and status involved. When a group is being formed it generally needs to negotiate a recording contract, unless one or more of the musicians involved already has a deal with a record company. If they are signed to different companies, a horse-trade like the following can take place. When C S & N were in the formative stages, Stephen Stills was already signed to Atlantic as a holdover from his contract with Buffalo Springfield, David Crosby was contractually at liberty, while Graham Nash was still signed to Epic, the company for whom he had recorded as a member of the Hollies. So Atlantic got Nash, while in exchange Epic got Richie Furay, another ex-member of the Buffalo Springfield. Furay formed the very successful Poco, and both companies lived happily ever after. As may be readily

THE SUPERSTARS

Led Zeppelin Masters of Heavy Rock

Led Zeppelin are a 'supergroup' in every sense of the word. Since 1968, when they first came together, they have broken box-office records everywhere and have sold more than 10,000,000 LPs.

They now command more than £25,000 for a concert in the States, are the epitome of heavy rock, and the acknowledged masters of the cacophonous crescendo.

They consist of the near legendary skill of Jimmy Page on guitar, the giant voice of Robert 'Percy' Plant, the manic thrashing of John 'Bonzo' Bonham on drums, and the swirling punch of John Paul Jones (alias John Baldwin) on bass guitar. The climax of Zeppelin's 1973 US tour was a series of three concerts at New York's Madison Square Garden, pulling an audience of 25,000 people at each concert.

The Garden Explodes

At each of the performances, the Garden was absolutely jam-packed inside and out, and the group had to be wheeled into the bowels of the stadium through a heavily guarded and barricaded entrance. The group sat around relaxing until the enormous frame of manager Peter Grant pushed through the dressing-room door to bawl that the show must start. So, greeted by a huge roar from the audience, the band appeared on stage. The lights went up and a solid, unremitting wave of sound soared out from the massive PA set-up, wrenching at the audience's viscera. Plant's voice, sounding as if amplification was unnecessary, carefully manipulated the listeners, lifting them gently through a verse to bring them hurtling down with a crash of drums and guitars which escalated to an almost unbearable pitch. They were left stunned and silent in the brief respite before the next chorus. Page effortlessly churned out an intricate but weighty solo, his hands moving in a blur of speed, throwing out pattern after pattern of electrifying noise.

Alternating the mood between savage gut-rock and tender love song, Led Zeppelin pummeled their way through nearly three hours of non-stop music, and though the mood may have changed, the tension certainly didn't. But it wasn't just a case of volume and dynamics. Unlike many

other contenders to the rock throne, the solidity of their music is created by a carefully woven, complete, and resilient net of musical variation in which loudness is only used as a means of contrast. The stadium thundered with applause for a full 15 minutes before the band came back for the first of their two encores. Though they put on a dazzling visual show, their musical expertise was the most potent weapon in their arsenal, and the show a breathtaking climax to a magnificent tour.

Jimmy Page is often regarded as the musical 'nemesis' of Zeppelin, a quiet and withdrawn character famed for his silent strength and emotion, emotion that only shows in his immaculate guitar style. His musical pedigree is perhaps the longest and most diverse of all the members of the band. During the early '60s, Page left school and joined Neil Christian's Crusaders, touring Britain on a continuous cycle of one-nighters until the strain made him ill. He then split to art college, playing at London's Marquee Club in an 'interval band'. There he was spotted, and then followed several years of session work, playing on sessions for the Who, the Kinks, and a multitude of records by nearly every major British artist and act. In 1965, Jimmy worked as a producer for the Immediate label, producing John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton on lead guitar. A double-album of unfinished material recorded at Jimmy's house, featuring Jimmy and Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones, and the Cyril Davies' All-Stars, was released by Immediate in 1969, after Zeppelin had become famous.

Though he had turned down the job of replacing Eric Clapton as lead guitarist in the Yardbirds when Clapton left to join the Bluesbreakers, in July '66 Jimmy joined as bass player when Paul Samwell-Smith left. Though he had never played bass on stage before, he knew most of the group's material as he had been a friend of theirs for some time. Then, during a tour of the States, lead guitarist Jeff Beck was taken ill and Jimmy had the nerve-wracking job of standing in for him. It went so well that he and Jeff became possibly the first twin-lead players, setting audiences aflame during the Stones/Yardbirds US tour in September '66. Unfortunately, the partnership didn't last long as Beck left at the end of the year, and recordings of the group with two lead guitarists are now very rare. Jimmy stayed on until the Yardbirds, disillusioned split in July '68.

Determined that the Yardbirds shouldn't disappear without trace, Jimmy and Chris Dreja (the Yardbirds' bass player) set out to find musicians to form the New Yardbirds. The new group was originally intended to consist of Jimmy on guitar, Dreja on bass, Terry Reid (then lead singer with Peter Jay and the Jay Walkers) as lead vocalist, and drummer Paul Francis. Reid, now a well-known solo artist, had at the time just been signed as a solo singer to Mickie Most and couldn't join. Instead, he suggested a singer called Robert Plant who had been in the highly-rated Band Of Joy. Jimmy went to hear 'Percy' Plant singing with a band called Obbstweedle, and knew he was the one. An old friend from Robert's Band of Joy days, 'Bonzo' Bonham, was thinking of leaving Tim Rose's backing band, and Jimmy also went to see him play. "When I saw what a thrasher Bonzo was, I knew he'd be incredible . . . He was into exactly the same sort of stuff as I was." The lineup for the New Yardbirds was by now almost complete.

Always rather torn in career terms, Chris Dreja decided to emigrate to the States to become a photographer (he took the back-cover shot on Led Zeppelin's first album), and ex-Jet Harris player and famous session-man John Paul Jones was brought in to play bass and keyboards. It was after their first tour, of Scandinavia, that the group decided to drop the 'New Yardbirds' name, as only one of the band had actually played in the original group. So, in October 1968 they adopted a name that Who drummer Keith Moon had thought up, and Led Zeppelin came into being. Their very first concert in London won them two encores, two standing ovations, and massive plaudits from the pop press. They had arrived.

Sexual Lyrics

The first album, 'Led Zeppelin' was released in early 1969 and confirmed that the group were more than able to transcend the gap between stage and disc. It had been recorded in only 30 hours, less than five weeks after the group had been formed. That is difficult to imagine when one listens to the superb tightness of the sound and the masterful production. Ace engineer Glyn Johns (also engineer of the Faces' albums) must take much of the credit as must Jimmy Page, the album's producer. The album was centred around aggressive rock with predominately sexual lyrics, with Page's clinically eclectic, but nevertheless brilliant, guitar playing standing out. One oddity aspect was the inclusion of 'Black Mountain Side', an acoustic steel-strung guitar number reminiscent of Bert Jansch (a fabled acoustic player who became even better known as part of the Pentangle folk group).

Though the band's album sales have always been extremely healthy, they decided very early on not to release any singles in Britain, and to keep an equal emphasis on playing live gigs. Under the